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FOR

BELIEF AND DISBELIEF

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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THE HALLOWING OF WORK

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FACULTIES AND DIFFICULTIES

FOR

BELIEF AND DISBELIEF

BY THE REV.

FRANCIS PAGET, D.D.

CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH AND REGIUS PROFESSOR OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY
SOMETIME VICAR OF BROMSGROVE

SECOND EDITION

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Preface to the First Edition.

IN sending these Sermons to the Press I am anxious to acknowledge how very little there is in them that is in any sense original. Some were written under the impulse of books which had at the time brought me especial help; help which, I fear, I may have failed in some cases to trace, after the lapse of several years, to the source from which I drew it, and to acknowledge as I would. All owe much to the influence of a few writers who have taught me most of the little that I may know. Who they are will, I think, be best shown by the recurrence of their names in the notes: but such references cannot sufficiently tell my continual indebtedness to them in all work that I try to do. And so my best hope in this venture of publication is that I may perhaps suggest to some others the lines of thought which I have learnt from these my masters.

FRANCIS PAGET.

CHRIST CHURCH, *Lent* 1887.

Preface to the Second Edition.

I AM very grateful for the sympathy which has made necessary a second edition of these sermons ; and in preparing this I have done what I could to mend the faults of detail. A graver blemish, of which I am conscious, I would gladly have set right, had it been within my reach : for I think that the censure which the title of the book has received is, in part at least, deserved. But it seems even harder to change a bad name than to get a good one ; and so, regretfully, I must bide by my mistake.

F. P.

CHRIST CHURCH, *October* 1888.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

It is proverbially dangerous to attempt to define the characteristics of the age in which one lives. It is like trying to sketch a mountain as one climbs up its slopes, or to criticise an elaborate and delicate movement of orchestral music while one is sitting close under the trombones. One is too near to see things in their true proportions—too particularly concerned to be impartial. And there is yet a further peril in venturing upon any analysis of the component forces astir in movements or tendencies hostile to one's own position : it is so difficult to give full reality and vividness to feelings which one cannot share ; so nearly impossible to be as respectful towards other people's inconsistency as towards one's own.

And yet it is clearly impossible to bear rightly any part, however humble, in current life and thought, without forming some conception of the characteristic conditions under which we have to work, and of the mental and moral climate in which our lot is cast. Without reference to such a conception we shall often misunderstand the case with which we try to deal ; we

shall miss the point for which we make ; because, though we steered straight for it, we made no allowance for the state of the tide and the drift of the side-currents. We must go about our work,—if it be work of any subtlety at all,—with some belief in regard to the modes of thought and feeling prevalent among those to whom we would appeal, or from whom we are compelled to differ. We must try to understand the qualities of soil and air which affected the early growth and perhaps determined the first appearance of the products which we see around us : we must seek to penetrate below the surface of words and phrases and arguments, and to judge, by their inner history, what they really mean to those who use them. Such endeavours may be hazardous, but they are necessary ; and the best safeguard against the dangers which beset them is not, surely, to ignore such signs of the times as we can see, nor to shrink from seeing as clearly as we can ; but rather to keep our impressions subject to correction : to regard them as tentative, to be lightly held, and qualified or discarded at the bidding of any wider experience : and never to be sure that because a man occupies a certain position he must have reached it by the way which we have observed, or be going to follow the lines which our scheme would mark out for him. Briefly, it seems a wiser caution against injustice or presumption

to keep one's mind and heart open, rather than one's eyes shut: to try to be always patient, reverent, gentle, and generous in one's judgment of individuals, rather than to refuse to recognise and define the general characteristics, the peculiar fashions of thinking and speaking, which seem to be prevalent in the present age.

One such characteristic has been kept in view in the selection of these Sermons: a characteristic whose reality and importance seem hardly to be disputed. It is surely true that in the present day the discouraging influence of uncertainty in matters of religion works far more widely than any formal criticism of the grounds of faith: that very many educated men are in a state and temper of mind in which, though they may be acquainted with no decisive argument against the truth of the Christian Creed, they yet feel that they are very far indeed from enjoying that sense of security which is attached to the recognition of a Divine and final revelation. They may have framed no logical or express denial of our Lord's Divinity or of His Resurrection; but they are hindered and unnerved by an indefinite sense that His Name is everywhere spoken against, and His empire, both in the world around them and in their own hearts, much less steadfast than once it seemed. They might be willing to allow that, so far as they know, the old arguments from prophecy, from documents,

from the history of the Church, and from its moral achievements, remain on the whole unaltered, and collectively of great force; but somehow these lay no hold upon their minds, and win no access to the springs of action:—there is certainly much to be said in favour of Christianity, more indeed than they have ever formulated for its disproof, and yet they cannot take to themselves its words, its hope, its life; they cannot rise and move towards it, or throw their heart into its allegiance. Sometimes its voice sounds to them far-off and lifeless, as the cries that come to us in dreams; sometimes, when their soul seems waking to answer and obey, it is checked by some dim, discomforting association, such as we may feel, whether we will or no, when we meet a man against whom we know that we have heard some grave charge, which we cannot exactly recall, and perhaps never quite believed. And so they fall back in the twilight, irresolute, discouraged, disabled for the act of faith; more and more inclined to order their life without reference to claims which yet they cannot absolutely deny. They unconsciously displace religion from its supremacy in thought and action; and though they may never have declared formally that the throne is vacant, they certainly find themselves more ready to submit to new claimants for its authority.

It has seemed to the writer that in many cases two

groups of causes may be traced behind this pathetic drifting out of the light of faith. The two parts of the following collection of Sermons are intended by him to correspond in their general bearing with these two groups, which he would venture here to indicate as briefly as he can.

(i.) It is surely true to say that in any concrete matter the evidence of external argument is only one part—and usually the less cogent and effective part—of the whole ground on which we believe and act. It has been well, and probably often, said that “we never do, in fact, believe anything upon external evidence only.” There must always be a certain congeniality, a sense of relation and correspondence, between ourselves and the facts that are proposed for our acceptance, before we can “incorporate the latter into ourselves by belief.”¹ Sometimes this sense of correspondence is drawn from an antecedent feeling that the fact in question is probable or likely:² it has already some kindred among our thoughts; and this gives it the necessary credentials for entrance into our minds; while on the other hand there are some statements which no external evidence could ever carry further than the sense of hearing: some which could only force the barrier of our assent

¹ J. B. Mozley, *Lectures and other Theological Papers*, p. 3.

² Cf. R. C. Trench, *Notes on the Parables*, p. 14 note.

with such a revulsion of our being that we should almost cease to be ourselves.¹ Other groups of facts there are whose outward evidence is similarly interpreted and brought home to us by their affinity and sympathy with ideas and longings and tendencies so strong and deep, so widely common among men, that we do not hesitate to call them instinctive. Such facts wake in us a peculiar sense that we have a place, an answer, a work already prepared for them; we apprehend them with a quickness of understanding which is even startling to us; they do not seem strange to us, but are as though they had been in some way connected with our earliest thoughts; and we have as we stand before them an experience like that obstinate impression, which some persons feel, that long ago they looked upon some scene which yet they know that they are visiting for the first time.

Now it is by such a correspondence with instincts and forms of thought and feeling that the facts of religion are carried beyond the surface of our life. The warrant of assent in religion, as in very many other

¹ Cf. E. Dowden, *Shakspeare: his Mind and Art*, p. 242: "Othello with his barbaric innocence and regal magnificence of soul must cease to live the moment he ceases to retain faith in the purity and goodness which were to him the highest and most real things upon earth."

matters, is twofold: the act of faith results from the consilience and union of two forces issuing from opposite sides. On the one hand, from without, from the authenticated documents, from the history of the Church, from its work upon the world, and from similar sources, there comes a series of arguments which the criticism of centuries, with its continuous pressure and progressive acuteness, has been unable to dissipate, and which urge upon our most careful study the facts of the historic Creed; on the other hand, from within, there move towards the reception and recognition of those facts certain instincts and impulses and cravings which, if we know anything at all, we know to be the most steadfast and imperious characteristics of our soul. It is by the blending and alliance of these powers that we believe in Him that is true; believe, not in slow submission to a process of inference, but by the recognition of a harmony foreshadowed in our earliest thoughts; not as helpless captives, fettered and reluctant in their conqueror's triumph, but as sharing in the victory which we own, and welcoming in Him Who draws us to Himself the realisation of our bravest prophecy, and the very fulfilment of our own imperfect life. And as He speaks to us, as He tells the story of His Life and Death and Resurrection, as He offers us the merits of His Sacrifice for our sins, the grace of His Sacraments

for our renewal, we feel that His words presume and find in us needs and instincts which were hidden, it may be, even from ourselves—

“High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised” :

“Whence knowest thou me?” we ask : and then make answer to ourselves : “Lo, this is our God ; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.” “Thine eyes, O Lord, did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in Thy book were all my members written. For lo, there is not a word in my tongue, but Thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.” “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye seeth Thee.”

There is, of course, nothing approaching to novelty in such a conception of the act whereby truth is discerned. The oldest and the newest inquirers into the nature of assent furnish us with expressions of this belief in regard to it. It may well seem to be present in the strange, suggestive words, which look like a splendid guess, as one reads them in the philosophy of the fifth century before Christ :—

γαίη μὲν γὰρ γαίαν ὀπώπαμεν, ὕδατι δ' ὕδωρ,
αἰθέρι δ' αἰθέρα διόν, ἀτὰρ πυρὶ πῦρ ἀίδηλον,
στοργῆ δὲ Στοργήν, Νεῖκος δέ τε νείκει λυγρό.¹

¹ Empedocles ap. Arist. *de Animá*, A. ii. 6. Trendelenburg's note on the passage seems to indicate the suggestion : “Jam

Probably its presence could be traced all through the history of thought, and in our own day it has been set forth, with incomparable skill and characteristic delicacy and subtlety, by Dr. Newman in *The Grammar of Assent*; and by Dr. Mozley in the first of his *Theological Lectures*, with that equally characteristic amplitude and penetration of thought, which seem to leave so very little to be said either after or against him. And still more recently, in *The Wish to Believe*, Mr. Wilfrid Ward has most shrewdly and thoroughly answered the obvious and trite objections which may always be alleged against the position. Plainly, in regard to large tracts of thought and life, "affection is" (in Dr. Mozley's words) "part of insight; it is wanted for gaining due acquaintance with the facts of the case."

But then, if this familiar conception of the conditions under which truth is recognised be true, it has a very grave and wide bearing upon the significance of any change of feeling in religious matters which may be noted in any particular age. For clearly a deficiency or an intensity of the result may be due to a failure or

alter sequitur philosophorum ordo, qui, misso movendi principio, cognitionem spectarunt. Quibus hoc commune est, quod rerum et cognitionis affinitatem vel cognationem quaerebant, ne mens, quae cognoscit, et res, quae cognoscuntur, quasi dissociabiles distinerentur."

an increase in either of the two forces whose consilience is required. It is not only true that, as Dr. Mozley says, "we need not be surprised if" certain "minds are not convinced by the external evidence for Christianity, when they do not possess those inward premisses without which the external are necessarily defective"; it is also probable that anything which enfeebles, or beclouds, or distracts, or misdirects the inner energy, the contribution which the man himself should bring, will, perhaps without any change at all in the weight of the external force, impair and impoverish the act of belief. Without passing over into a state of recognised disbelief, men will feel themselves less and less affected by the appeal of Christianity, if they are neglecting, or dissipating, or misguiding, or repressing the instincts and cravings which Christianity presumes.¹ For "Christianity is addressed, both as regards its evidences and its contents, to minds which are in the normal condition of human nature. . . . It speaks to

¹ Without claiming evidential value for experience which cannot be critically examined, it may be suggested that very many persons have known something of the contrary variation, in the Religious life and in times of Retreat. The recall of the spiritual faculties from distraction, the self-recollection thus gained, the liberation of deep instincts which a hurried life had hidden, have in many cases given a new intensity and steadfastness of vigour to the act of faith, though the external appeal was almost unchanged.

us one by one, and it is received by us one by one, as the counterpart, so to say, of ourselves, and is real as we are real.”¹ “The counterpart of ourselves”:—over against the mysterious depths, the delicate complexity, the unfathomed possibilities of our inner life, stands that which claims to be the complement, the satisfaction of all our faculties:—which undertakes to lead our nature to its perfect development, its true and everlasting life; to fill the mind with light, the heart with love; to enter into the inscrutable recesses of our being, and to renew its every part and power with the gift of faultless health. It is real to us as we ourselves are real: in proportion as we meet it in the wholeness of our nature, sincere and simple, and natural and whole-hearted and unabashed in the confession of our needs, our ignorance, our weakness, our hopes and fears, so will it bear into our hearts the manifold conviction of its reality; at point after point we shall own its insight into our hearts, its sympathy with our life, its power to give us health and strength. But every instinct or faculty withheld, bewildered, or distorted, invalidates so far our power of recognition and acceptance, or, at the least, delays our discovery of some harmony, some witness of kindred, as it were, which should have bound us closer than ever to the

¹ J. H. Newman, *The Grammar of Assent*, pp. 490, 491.

truth thus better known. And surely any man who begins to think that Christianity means less to him than once it did, would do well to inquire very carefully which of the two consilient forces in the act of faith is really failing: whether the weight of external evidence for the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has been certainly and seriously impaired; or whether, on the other hand, any elements, instincts, powers, senses, in his own inner being, presumed and addressed by Christianity, have faded into listlessness, or swerved aside to some unworthy aim, or been bewildered and neglected in the speed and stress of life.

It is the hope of the Sermons grouped together in the first part of this selection to indicate, however inadequately, some of the faculties or desires which are thus called to witness to the things of faith; to trace their correspondence with the revelation of Jesus Christ; to suggest how their energy and freedom and simplicity may perhaps be imperilled in the present day.

(ii.) The Sermons in the second part were chosen with a different purpose,—with the hope that they might suggest a few of the very serious difficulties which beset the position of disbelief.

Foremost, perhaps, among the prevalent discouragements of faith is a general impression that very many “difficulties” may be and have been alleged against

the Christian Creed; so many, indeed, that there is hardly anything left that a plain man may hold with any sense of security. And this impression is only slightly modified by the fact that these difficulties are continually being met and dealt with by Christian writers. For there is a very wide difference between the cogency of cumulative evidence in affirmation and in denial; very few men can, or, at any rate, usually do, give due weight to a group of probable arguments in favour of such a system as Christianity; while almost all are unreasonably impressed by a succession of destructive suggestions, even though each in its turn has been answered and, it may be, dispelled. The Christian cause is thought by many to be weak, simply because they see it constantly assailed, constantly on the defensive. Dr. Jellett in his striking Lectures on the Efficacy of Prayer truly says: "The word 'apologist,' so commonly applied to those who have written favourably of the evidence of Christianity, expresses a disadvantageous position, which has been very generally assigned to them, and which they have been, I think, too ready to accept." He goes on to show that in many controversies—in all which deal with purely theoretical science—the merely critical bearing may quite fairly be maintained on one side: such controversies may quite well and justly be "conducted

between critics on the one side, and defenders, or, to use our former term, apologists, on the other." That is to say, in regard to a pure bit of scientific theory three attitudes are possible: belief, disbelief, or unbelief. "But let the question pass from the region of theory to the region of practice, and the third of these attitudes usually becomes impossible. If the question which the theory professes to solve be a practical one, you cannot usually take up the position of unbelief. You may act as if you believed the theory to be true, or you may act as if you believed it to be false; but you cannot act as if you did not know whether it be true or false. So far as your actions are concerned, you cannot leave the question undecided."¹

This is surely true, and applicable to the main and central questions in regard to Christianity. It is a certain way of life, a certain aim for effort, a certain line of growth, that is set before us: a practical demand is an inseparable and essential part of the Christian Creed: and therefore we cannot simply leave the problem unsolved and the whole matter in abeyance: for to ignore the demand is, with whatever degree of consciousness, to deny the Creed. Elijah was perfectly logical in his challenge to the people of Israel upon

¹ J. H. Jellett, "The Efficacy of Prayer."—*Donnellan Lectures for 1877*, p. 4.

Mount Carmel ; there was no middle way between the horns of his dilemma : the choice between Jehovali and Baal necessarily involved practical consequences ; and therefore a position of enlightened uncertainty, of suspended judgment, or of blameless indifference, was simply impossible.

But if this be so in the case of Christianity—if every man who thinks must decide in practice, and that without much delay, between belief and disbelief—then the question is not “Are there any difficulties in the way of belief?” but “Are there more difficulties in the way of believing or in the way of disbelieving?” The choice is between two mutually exclusive theories and ways of life : which is the more probable, the more liveable?—Let then the assailant of Christianity stand sometimes in his turn as the apologist of disbelief : it is not enough for him to make Christians uneasy : let him show that he can make men easy in disbelief :—and these not only men of leisure and cultivation, with sufficient comforts, alleviations for all annoyances, and varied interests ; but also the weak and poor and sickly and sorrowful and weary and heavy-laden. It is not enough to be brilliant in negative criticism : disbelief must in turn take up the defensive side ; and then the Christian assailant may have something to say about its difficulties, considered as a positive, practical, and

universal scheme for living—and dying—men and women.

When it is so considered, when it ceases simply to question, to criticise, and to shake its head at the inconclusive evidence of Christianity, and comes forward to offer its own account of the facts, its own response to the needs, of human life in all its breadth and depth and height, it appears that the attitude of disbelief has its difficulties as well as the venture of faith. What seemed safe while it was merely negative becomes perilous when it is forced to be positive: and in matters of conduct, be it remembered, one must either affirm or deny: suspended judgment may be often possible and right; but not suspended action. And so the writer would venture to urge that the method advocated and employed by Dr. Jellet in his *Donnellan Lectures* ought, if only in charity to those who are depressed and alarmed by the sheer number of the attacks on a system which is, apparently, always apologetic, to be more generally considered, at all events, in regard to the issues raised in modern controversy. The choice is not between the Christian system with its difficulties and a safe and cautious reticence, committed to nothing and involving no perplexity, but between two contrary ways of belief and life, two sharply contrasted views of what a man is, how he must use the little time he has

here; and both must recognise all the conditions of their common problem, all the troublesome, obstinate facts that they would like to ignore or transform into something more congenial with their respective theories.

This has surely been too little recognised by those who have written on the Christian side. And, apart from nearer consequences in the discussion of the several issues, there has resulted, in the minds of many who have perhaps only looked at the struggle from afar off, or heard confusedly, day after day, the strife of tongues, a growing sense of discouragement, a vague feeling that all the difficulties seem to be on one side, and a suspicion that the ever-aggressive combatants have nothing to fear, and the ever-defensive little to hope. Perhaps if anything like as much attention had been devoted to the difficulties of disbelief as to the difficulties of belief, fewer men would be drifting out of all real loyalty and devotion to our Lord; fewer would be thinking that Christianity has lost its grip of human life; fewer would be wondering what will be left for their children to believe in when they grow up; and fewer religious people would know anything of those moments of chill and gloomy terror which will break into the life of all faith—unless it be indeed most vivid and robust—when day after day brings tidings of some fresh assault upon the walls, or some mustering of more forces in the distance.

It would be plainly absurd to think that a few sermons—necessarily fragmentary, and very loosely consecutive—can be offered as any real contribution to the work which is here suggested. If there be indeed any real need and opportunity for such work, it must be done in a very different way; the difficulties of disbelief must be shown with as much care and precision and philosophic intensity and justice of thought as has been used in bringing out the difficulties of belief. The writer of these pages is sincerely conscious that his work lags very far behind the demands of the case—almost out of sight of the battle-field. But when he was asked to publish a volume of sermons, it seemed to him that whatever use they might have, in their entire lack of originality, would depend, under God's blessing, upon their being linked together by some common thought. And so, as has been said, he has tried to gather into the first part of this volume a few intended to speak of some faculties of the inner life, the neglect or misuse of which may sometimes hinder the soul from making its answer to the appeal of outward evidence. The realization of one's own personal existence; the longing for a life in which to lose and so to save one's self; the unhindered and infinite aspiration of the moral sense; the belief in the reasonableness and worth of life; a pure sense of beauty, in nature and in art; the recognition of

certain truths about the intellectual life ; the realization of the true dignity of our own nature : these are among the forces which Christianity presumes in us, and on their health and vigour will depend the fulness and justice of our answer to the revelation of Jesus Christ. The second part of the series is even more incomplete than the first. But it may just point to a few of those needs of human souls, those momentous facts in moral history, those indissoluble and calmly realised experiences of the spiritual life which it is so difficult to deal with from the standpoint of disbelief, so impossible to arrange in any philosophy which would say that man must live without God in the world. The following plain and noble words indicate, in regard to one class of these phenomena, the sort of evidential value which is here claimed for them all:—"The fact is, Christian people believe that the blessedness they look for is not wholly unknown, but that foretastes and anticipations of it exist on earth. These are deniable ; and they must be denied with absolute determination by every person who rejects the Christian Faith. If they exist they are irrefragable, and prove Christ Lord of all ; if they do not, then His servants are, in a real sense, of all men most miserable : as those who let them pass unaccounted for are of all men least logical."¹

¹ R. St. John Tyrwhitt, *Christian Ideals and Hopes*, p. 110.

PART I.

I.

THE VIRTUE OF SELF-ASSERTION :

(1) *IN THE LIFE OF THE INTELLECT.*

“ Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass : for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.”

ST. JAMES I. 22, 23, 24.

THERE is a very strange and suggestive contrast between the two senses in which it may be said that a man “ forgets himself.” On the one hand the phrase is sometimes used to mark that high grace of sympathy or love whereby the desire and energy of the heart is transferred from the gratification of a man’s own tastes to the pure service of his fellow-men : that true conversion, whereby the will is rescued from its original sin of selfishness and wholly set upon the glory of God and the good of those for whom His Son was crucified. To the very noblest and most fearless impulse of devotion we give the praise of self-forgetfulness : we recognise and are abashed by it in any one who counts

not his life dear unto himself, that he may finish his course with joy and the ministry which he has received. But it is, surely, an inaccurate use of words to say of such an one that he forgets himself. For he only forgets his own wishes and pleasures and comfort, he forgets those things which other men gather round them and delight in until they seem essential to their very life; but all the while his true self is vividly and actively present in the labour which proceedeth of love: it goes freely out in unreserved devotion, only to come again with joy, enriched and strengthened both by the exercise of its affection and the answering love which it has won. So it has been well said that in the life of love we die to self: but the death is one not of annihilation but of transmigration.¹ It is in the other sense of the common phrase that men do more truly forget themselves: when they so surrender their will to some blind impulse, some irrational custom, some animal craving, that for a while they seem driven as autumn leaves before the changing gusts, they know not how or whither. For then all the characteristics of personal existence seem hurried into abeyance; the conscious choice, the criticism and control of circumstances, the sustained and reasonable will, the very consciousness of self and of its manifold relations,—all are overwhelmed and forgotten in the vehemence of the storm.

¹ J. Caird, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 283.

In regard to some violent forms of passion, this terrible power by which they seem to hide us from ourselves, is even proverbial; so we say that anger is a passing madness, or that a man is beside himself with rage, or jealousy, or lust. But there are also other ways, less evident and discreditable, by which we can so allow external forces to distract or overcloud that self-conscious life which makes us men, that we may be untouched and unaided by all the deep mysterious powers which wait upon the growing realization of this, our great prerogative of personality. We can so place our faculties and feelings of body and mind at the disposal of circumstances, or of our fellow-men, that the sense of our own personal being, and of the life which we can share with no man, falls far away into the background of our thoughts. A man can live for days, and months, and years, without ever giving any reality or force to the knowledge that he is himself an immortal soul; without ever really feeling his essential separation from things visible, his independence of them, his distinct existence in himself, his power of acting for himself in this way or in that, his personal responsibility for his every choice and action. As he wakes in the morning, as he is regaining from the blind life of sleep the wonder of self-consciousness, at once the countless interests which await him in the coming day rush in upon him; there, in his own room, during

the one half-hour, perhaps, when he can be alone in all his waking-time, the distractions of the outer world are already around him. There is this or that change to be corresponded with, there is a difficulty to be faced or evaded, a point to be gained, some one to be gratified or conciliated, such and such details of work or pleasure to be provided for, so many letters to be written; before he sees a face, or hears a voice, all his thoughts are already hurrying into the commerce of business or enjoyment, he is giving up the reins of his life to the forces which are about him, and losing himself in the bewildering currents of a complex society. And so he goes forth to his work and to his labour until the evening; and all day long he is looking only at the things about him, he is committing the guidance and control of his ways to that blind and alien life which wavers and struggles around him, and of which he should rather be himself the critic and guide. And in the course of a life so dependent on external forces, the range of fashion, or of public or professional opinion, the requirements of other men, or of the man's own pleasures, are ever encroaching on the domain of free and conscious action; more and more of his energy and interest is transferred and put at the disposal of circumstances, until at last it may be simply inconceivable to him that a day will come when all this moving mass of life and change around him will fall away from

him as a dream when one awaketh, and leave in the bare and hard reality of its eternal being that solitary self which he has so long neglected and forgotten. For of course our forgetfulness cannot really change or dissipate the self, the soul which God has made us ; we cannot undo or reverse that miracle by which He first called man out of the ranks of all creation, and gave to him alone the gift of consciousness, that he should no longer “nourish a blind life within the brain,” but should know himself, the world, and God ; personality may be neglected, or forgotten, or denied ; it can never, we may be quite sure, through all eternity, be alienated or annulled. Whatever mists and clouds we gather round it, it remains, and waits till death shall take them all away ; till, in the world where truths cannot be masked, we stand, our very selves, and hear a voice from which we can no more escape—“Be still, and know that I am God.”

We can never cancel the act whereby man became a living soul ; we can never cease to be ourselves. But we can so turn away from self-knowledge, we can so forget ourselves and our responsibility, that this first and deepest truth of our being will no longer have its proper power in our lives.¹ It is of such a dim and

¹ Cf. *Vie de Monseigneur Dupanloup*, i. 198 : “Le même jour, M. de Talleyrand écrivait encore : ‘Une foule de gens ont le don ou

aimless self-neglect that St. James seems to speak in the words of the text. And surely in the characteristics of the present age, both good and bad, there is much to make such self-forgetfulness easy to most men, to some at times almost inevitable. The manifold details of an elaborate civilisation are ready at every turn to save us from the necessity of self-determination ; fashion offers itself as the director of our ways, if not, as sometimes seems to be the case, even as the keeper of our conscience. The intense and splendid activity of professional life, pressing into its service all the mechanism which can increase its strength, or delicacy, or speed, draws under its own disposal every thought and faculty of those who seem to find in such high and difficult work a sufficient exercise for all they have and are. But, above all, the ever-growing rapidity with which new impressions from without are poured upon us from every source, by every avenue of sense and understanding, so that the single mind is inundated and distracted by the experiences which a century ago would have seemed enough to fill a hundred lives at least ; above all, I say, this multiplication of the external factor in our lives beyond any possible development of our inner powers of judgment and reflection, sweeps over the self-consciousness of our spiritual being, and hurries us

l'insuffisance de ne jamais prendre connaissance d'eux-mêmes : je n'ai que trop le malheur ou la supériorité contraire ' "

away into a brilliant and exciting thoughtlessness. Yet if this, or anything like this, is true of us—if we are faltering in the discernment and recollection of our undying personality, it is indeed a most serious and widely-reaching loss. For, in such a case, we are losing hold on that which is almost essential to the life and growth of religious belief, and to the progressive recognition of God's truth. Such blurring of our own self-consciousness will always obscure and invalidate for us the evidences of Christianity, always hinder and imperil our progress in the life of faith. Let me try briefly to show the certainty and manner of this result by speaking of three chief points in the Christian revelation which essentially presume, and require for the very understanding of their terms, that we should know ourselves as personal and spiritual beings.

First, then, in the very front of Christianity, in the very Name of Him Whom the Church preaches and adores, is set the thought of our salvation from our sins; and unless we are able to understand what sin means, unless the word touches and wakes some experience in our consciousness, we are without a sense which is presupposed by every form in which the work of Christ can come before us. We are about as likely to understand a book written in a language of which we know only the prepositions and conjunctions as to enter into the truth of the Christian Creed without any

appreciation of the meaning of sin. For now, as of old, in the history of every soul as in the history of the whole world, before the day of the Lord Elias must first come, before we can see the Lamb of God we must have heard the voice crying in the wilderness, before our hearts can feel by what authority the work of Christ is done they must have owned their need of the Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The fact of sin is to Christianity what crime is to law, what sickness is to medicine; if sin, it has been truly said, were not an integral feature of human life, Christianity would long ago have perished.¹ Hence the consciousness, the appreciation of sin, is essential to any sufficient estimate of the claim which Christ's message has upon our attention and obedience; even as it is necessary for the interpretation of almost every page throughout the Bible, and presupposed in psalms, and histories, and prophecies, and types. We can only grasp the significance of the Old Testament when we read it as the manifold record of one great longing and anticipation, quickened, ordered, and sustained by God, greeted and satisfied at last in the revelation of our Saviour, Jesus. The Gospel of His Incarnation and Atonement loses its central meaning for those who think of sin only as a term in theology or a preacher's

¹ Cf. H. P. Liddon, *Some Elements of Religion*, p. 129.

commonplace; its evidence is duly weighed by those alone to whom sin is at least as real as sorrow, or poverty, or death. But it is obvious that our sense of sin depends upon the deep and steady recollection of our own distinct and personal existence. We shall not be troubled by the thought of it, or sensitive to its presence, while we are forgetting ourselves in the world around us, and throwing our souls into the flood and eddies of its business and pleasure; and though that world be indeed groaning and agonising with the misery which sin has wrought, yet shall we miss the secret of its discord and anguish unless we come to it ourselves with a broken and a contrite heart. For it is only when we draw back from the commerce of society, when we possess our souls in the resolute effort of self-knowledge, when, to borrow a vivid metaphor, we sink a shaft into the depths of our consciousness, that we touch the real home of sin, and know its significance and its terrors. In the recognition of the enfeebled and perverted will, of the early promise unfulfilled, of early hopes obscured or cast away; in the presence of hateful memories; in the sense of conflict with desires which we can neither satisfy nor crush, and pleasures which at once detain and disappoint us; above all, in a certain fearful looking for of judgment, we begin to enter into that great longing, which, through all the centuries of

history, has gone before the face of the Lord to prepare His way; and we learn to rise and welcome the witness of Him Who cries that our warfare is accomplished and our iniquity is pardoned.

And secondly, in proportion as the consciousness of our personal and separate being grows clear and strong within us, we shall be able to enter more readily and more deeply into the Christian doctrine of our immortality; we shall be better judges of the evidence for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come: for it is as personal spirits that we shall rise again with our bodies and give account for our own works. It must be hard for us to give reality to this stupendous and all-transforming truth, so long as our thoughts and faculties are dissipated among things which know no resurrection, and interests which really shall for ever die. For the fashion of this world passeth away, and the life which is committed to its guidance and lost in its pursuits is sure to catch the temper of its transience. There is a conviction of our immortality bound up with the exercise of self-conscious thought and self-determined will: whatever difficulty we may at first find in regard to the resurrection of the body, there is surely at least as much in conceiving how a personal spirit could ever cease to be. And, accordingly, the denial of a life beyond this world has

generally appeared, in theory or in practice, in conjunction with a state of things which has made it easy for men to put away or enfeeble the haunting thoughts of their own personal and separate being. And equally significant is the fact that in connection with such an obscurity of self-consciousness the strange passion for suicide appears in those who have not the strength or clearness of conscious thought and self-realization to project their personal existence beyond the cloud of death. In the dim and dreamy life of the Hindu, in the bewildering and absorbing chaos of sensuality which engulfed the society of Rome under certain of her Emperors, in the dissolute and fantastic paganism of the Renaissance, men could so fearfully forget themselves that they were conscious of little or nothing which seemed beyond the reach of death; and they gladly hailed or hastened its awful advent as though it were merely the final closing of a dreary game.¹ Shakespeare is, as always, true to human nature when he makes the suspicion of his own undying personality the restraining thought in Hamlet's mind:—

“There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life : . . .
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all ;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.”²

¹ Cf. H. P. Liddon, *Some Elements of Religion*, pp. 121-124.

² *Hamlet*, III. i. 68, 83.

And so it is with deep truth that George Eliot makes the fading sense of personal existence herald and preface in the distracted and exhausted soul the thought of suicide: "The strength," says the suffering and terrified girl, "the strength seemed departing from my soul; . . . the more I thought the wearier I got, till it seemed I was not thinking at all, but only the sky, and the river, and the Eternal God were in my soul. And what was it whether I died or lived?"¹ For indeed it is the steadfast self-realization of a personal spirit which gives the true sanctity to this life, and reaches with irresistible confidence beyond the death wherein it hardly seems to die. In that which each one of us means, or should mean, when he says "I," there is already latent the prophecy of a personal immortality, and the assurance that though worms destroy this body, yet "in my flesh shall I see God; Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."²

The message and the evidences of Christianity presuppose in us the clear sense of our own personality when they speak to us of sin, and when they point us to a life beyond the grave; and we are fit critics of their claim in proportion as we can realise this, our deep and separate existence. But there is a yet more

¹ *Daniel Deronda*, Bk. III. Ch. xx.

² Cf. R. W. Church, *Human Life and its Conditions*, pp. 49-51, 61-63.

awful and controlling truth, which we shall either penetrate with an ever-growing knowledge, or to our unspeakable loss disfigure and obscure, according as we remember or forget this mystery of our self-consciousness. For it is by means of our own selves that God reveals Himself to us : it is this gift of personal and conscious and self-determined life, this image and likeness of our Maker, which at once lifts us into dominion over everything that moveth upon the earth, and also enables us to enter more nearly into the revelation of the Three Blessed Persons in the Holy Trinity. We must know ourselves as personal before we can enter into the import of God's Self-revealing : He will seem far-off and uncertain to us while we are lost in the impersonal life of the world around us : when we are drifting aimlessly along upon the tide of fashion, letting others think and feel and will for us, then it is not strange if hazy thoughts of tendencies and laws begin to steal over our confession of the Personality of God. For with the holy He will be holy, and with the perfect man He will be perfect : the pure in heart shall see Him, while those who never have patience to possess their own souls are at least in danger of thinking that He is even such an one as themselves. It is when we recall ourselves from the scattered activity of our daily life ; it is either when we have courage to go apart and

stand alone and hear what the Lord God will say concerning us, or else when sickness or age has forced us into the solitude which we have always shunned : it is then that we know ourselves, and our need of a sufficient object in which the life of the soul may find its rest for ever. As one after another the interests of this world are removed ; as we begin to see that our work is not an adequate or lifelong scope for all we are ; as the friends whom God has given us go before us into death, and one by one the channels of our love are closed ; we may feel at last that deep, mysterious energy of the soul which must be set towards another Spiritual Being like itself ; and so we may prepare ourselves to listen with a new sense of hope and adoration, when

“ through the thunder comes a human Voice,
Saying, O heart I made, a heart beats here :
Thou hast no power, nor mayest conceive of mine :
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love Me who have died for thee.”¹

¹ R. Browning, *Poetical Works*, vol. v. p. 229.

II.

THE VIRTUE OF SELF-ASSERTION :

(2) *IN THE LIFE OF THE WILL.*

“Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.”--GENESIS XXII. 10.

THE unfading interest of men in the sacrifice of Isaac is a noble instance of the persistent and controlling power which a great deed exerts over succeeding generations, and of the conservation of force through all the changing conditions of moral history. Though every circumstance which made the deed to be praiseworthy, or possible, is gone beyond recall : though even the imagination refuses to realise that fearful crisis, and hangs back as we try to lead it to the rough altar, the piled-up fuel, the patient victim :—still, as we read the story, hardly the less does it compel our attention and demand our reverence. Its strength seems undiminished by the lapse of time, and unrestricted by differences of nationality and belief. The Christian

Church, as it looks back to that accepted offering, recognises the spirit of a more perfect Sacrifice, and feels that One greater than Abraham or Isaac is here. For the Jew, the importance of the type may be even emphasized by his ignorance of its fulfilment, as year by year he still pleads in the worship of the synagogue: "Look Thou, O Lord, upon the ashes of Isaac, and remember this day unto his seed his being bound upon the altar."¹ Such an act can never sink below the horizon of history; whose course seems hardly to travel beyond the shadow of that moral height, but rather to wind like a river round its base, that men may always lift their eyes to the steadfast glory of the everlasting hills. Thither let us look to-day, confident that, for the individual and the race alike, these Divine lessons of childhood are ever ready to yield new meaning and new help to later days, forsaking not in the time of age, showing God's strength to this generation, and His power to them that are yet to come.

Dr. Mozley, in his Lectures on "Ruling Ideas in Early Ages," has first expressed with the utmost clearness and strength, and then dispelled beyond recall, a thought which rises in many minds as they are turned towards Abraham's great act, and hinders their

¹ Cf. Archdeacon Freeman, *Principles of Divine Service*, vol. ii. pp. 106-112.

acknowledgment of its grandeur. He has shown how the outward form of the act, the undeserved death, and the violent inroad on a human life, for which Abraham stretched forth his hand, are not of the essence of the Divine command, and do not touch the heart, the central principle, of the patriarch's obedience; but belong only to the age through whose very imperfections the manifold wisdom of God achieved the most vivid expression of inspired faith. He, in His unwearied condescension, speaks at each stage in the growth and education of mankind, in terms which each can receive, and asks from every generation the noblest service which it, being such as it is, can render. It is the triumph of His skilful mercy, that through the imperfect conceptions of those earliest days faith should break out in a form such as she never again could wear; that a rude and almost pitiless age should leave behind it such a bare and plain, and, so to speak, abrupt confession of His supremacy as the culture and light of later periods would utterly forbid; and that the very fierceness of man should turn to His praise. The crushing of a father's tenderness, the stern purpose of that three days' journey, the deliberate infliction of suffering, the seeming wrong, the uplifted knife: we must not dwell on these; they are but as the circumstance of the great act itself, the scenery of the true

spiritual drama: they belong as closely to primitive culture as forms of language or social distinctions; and through them the faith of Abraham comes forth to meet the voice of God. They are past and gone with the period of which they were characteristic: long ago they yielded place to gentler ways and wiser laws: but through all the changes of civilisation, through all the shifting shapes of our environment, the inner form, the heart of the great sacrifice remains unchanged, to quicken and guide the souls of men by the challenge of an unhindered obedience. This is for us the meaning and substance of the act; we are not chiefly concerned with the antiquarian or anthropological interest of its outward conditions and appearance; the road of our thought leaves these on either hand to pass on to the inner depth where will is blending with will, and the faith of man is throwing itself in hope upon the Love of God. And there we find the secret of the act's unrivalled greatness, of its power with God, its control over men. For we see a human soul in quiet and steadfast obedience surrendering to God the richest wealth and highest hope which the service of a life has ever earned.—If God were to ask from us the full reward, the nearest blessing, the dearest achievement of all our past work, and with it the most helpful hope with which we ever encourage or delight ourselves, He

would still be asking far less than Abraham offered in the sacrifice of Isaac. For on the life of Isaac hung the fulfilment of that unbounded promise which made the meaning and purpose of his life; for whose sake he had left country and kindred and father's house, and gone out, not knowing whither he went; for whose sake he had cast out the bondwoman, and Ishmael, the child of his love and prayer. It seemed as though all else which could enrich his life had fallen away or been thrust aside in order that this one hope might engross the whole strength of his being, the whole range of his sight. Confirmed by the repeated assurance of God, defined more nearly at each repetition, concentrated now in the person of Isaac, that hope, that in him should all the families of the earth be blessed, stood before Abraham as the one expression and fulfilment of his life, almost as immortality itself: and for the sacrifice of that hope he now stretched forth his hand.¹

As we contemplate such an act of sacrifice, as we try to realize what was involved in such an unreserved and summary surrender of the whole content of this life, we must feel, I think, that the character of Abraham recedes into a far distance from all that we know of the thoughts, motives, and powers which are used in our

¹ Cf. J. B. Mozley, *Lectures on the Old Testament*, Lectures ii. and iii.

ordinary life. Wholly apart from all the vast change which severs us from the outward expression of his obedience, we feel ourselves to be, so far as we know ourselves, incapable of such unquestioning heroism. There is another gap between us and him besides that which has been caused by the restriction of a father's authority over his son, and the truer recognition of the rights of the individual. We see in the fulness of his self-surrender a moral strength to which we must look back somewhat as Homer looked, regretfully, to the lost vigour of the Trojan heroes.¹ In the sustained, deliberate, decisive effort of such an act there is a gathering up of all force, a fulness of self-realization, an intensity and singleness of determination, which seems impossible in the complexity and bewilderment of our life. Through all the stages of the trial, the will of Abraham is fixed in single, unswerving loyalty to a Voice which he alone has heard. Secondary considerations and thoughts of compromise do not trouble him: he knows himself: he knows Whom he has believed.

¹ Ἐκτωρ δ' ἀρπάξας λᾶαν φέρειν, ὅς ῥα πυλάων
 ἐστήκει πρόσθε, πρηνυτός, παχύς, αὐτὰρ ὑπερθευ
 ὀξὺς ἔην· τὸν δ' οὐ κε δὴ ἀνέρε δήμου ἀρίστῳ
 ῥηϊδίως ἐπ' ἄμαξαν ἀπ' οὐδεὸς ὀχλίσειαν,
 οἷοι γὲν βροτοὶ εἶσ'· ὁ δέ μιν ῥέα πάλλε καὶ οἶος."

For him, as he rises in the morning, and cleaves the wood, as he journeys from his tents, and climbs the hill and stands beside the altar, and stretches forth his hand, there are but two beings in the world: himself and God:¹—himself, free, conscious, called for a service which none but he can render, to God, the Author and Upholder of his being, in Whom, and for Whom alone, he lives, and from the brightness of Whose Presence the whole world falls back as though it were not. In the loneliness of this communion he rises to receive into every depth of his soul the revelation of God; he brings without reserve the full power of a single heart, and with undivided will gathers up the whole worth of life to make one worthy sacrifice.

Is it not true, brethren, that all the greatest acts of faith which rise above the level plains of history have been done in the strength of such self-realization, such high self-confidence, as this?—that it is the power to stand alone with God which makes men heroic and triumphant? Look back, for one example, to their courage, of whom, in the Church's youth, the world was not worthy. Try to conceive the strain of standing alone in the centre of the vast amphitheatre, in those minutes, perhaps, which were allowed to elapse

¹ Cf. J. H. Newman's *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i. pp. 15 *seq.*: Sermon IX. in the "Selection for the Seasons."

before the beasts were let loose upon their victims; standing there, ringed round with tier upon tier of scornful, hating, lustful faces; deafened by the derision and blasphemy of those with whom from childhood you have lived; waiting in utter isolation on the bare sand before that howling mob, to taste the bitterness of death. All your world is against you: the whole city thinks you mad: you have broken away from the wisdom and worship of the past, and rebelled against the common sense of the present: for reasons which are folly in the eyes of all that vast encircling crowd; for a Love which only your own heart knows: for a Voice which no one else has heard: for a hope which even you cannot conceive, you are going to make the utter, irrevocable sacrifice of your life. Surely for such an act as this the soul must have laid aside every weight, and looked away from all that is not God: and in the certainty of an unfaltering gaze, the intensity of a single allegiance, must have known itself and Him;—even as also we are known.

By far gentler ways, it may be, and with issues which seem less vivid and decisive, our faith has hitherto been tried, and our choice declared to God and men. The broad and the narrow way diverge so gradually, and the means of access from one to the other seem so frequent and easy, that perhaps we hardly know when

our course was settled and where we lost sight of the rejected road. We can recall no voice that ever spake with us, we have never known ourselves summoned to any decisive sacrifice; no sudden strain has ever threatened to drag us apart from the basal principles of our faith and life. Yet surely, brethren, we dare not anticipate that such a strain will never come: that we shall never in this time of our probation need all the spiritual strength which God has placed within our reach. Only a shallow view of modern life can let us think that its crises are less real or less dramatic than those in which the faith of Martyrs was tried, and triumphed. Destructive arguments which now we find it easy to reject, may, by better advocacy or by the unnoticed growth of some defect in our own judgment, acquire strange force and break in with startling novelty on our confidence: the fading faith of some whom we have loved and honoured may make scepticism seem a very different thing from that which now we think it: failure and adversity may overtax the strength of theories which were barely adequate for the guidance of easier days, and the storm of sorrow may wreck a faith which seemed fairly safe under a cloudless sky: temptations which now seem far away from our life may come round about us daily like water, and compass us together on every side. How are we pre-

paring ourselves for the approach, or the recurrence, of such trials as these? Are we ready, at their first threat, to gather all the forces of our being, and to meet the attack in clear and trustful consciousness of that immortal spirit which is each one of us? Do we know what it is to realize our self—to recall from all distraction, to separate from all accidents, to rescue from the importunities of sense and the mists of fancy that undying personality, that self-possessed, self-governing being which God made, knows, and will judge? Only thus can we calmly, gladly meet the trial of our faith, girding up, as St. Peter bids us, the loins of our mind, answering, as Abraham, to the voice of God—"Behold—I." For, to quote the words of a living teacher, "This real self it is which apprehends God with the understanding, which embraces Him with the affections, which resolves through the will to obey Him." "As personal spirits we are linked and bound to the Father of spirits; as spirits, we believe, we hope, we love; as spirits, we enter into the complex mystery and activities of prayer; as spirits, we take in each other that deep and penetrating interest which pierces beneath the outline of the human animal, and holds true converse with the supersensuous being within. All that weakens or lowers our consciousness of being spirits, weakens in that proportion our capacity for

religion ; all that enhances that consciousness, as surely enlarges it.”¹

It is sometimes said, and perhaps often thought, that the language of the Church in regard to the season of Lent is marked by an anachronism which may justify some neglect on the part of modern society and common sense ; and that principles and restrictions which in a violent and licentious age were not without their use, are, among the altered circumstances and habits of our day, entirely unpractical. Doubtless we may find them so, if, after annoying ourselves, and perhaps others, by the laborious observance of a few self-chosen rules, we emerge from the forty days without having gained any deeper knowledge of the things which belong to our peace. But the result may be very different if, by God’s grace, we so use the challenge and the opportunities of those days as to learn, before they are past, more of that buried life which the haste and clamour of our pleasure and work encourage us to forget ; if by prayer and watchfulness we recover something of that true self-mastery which brings men near to God. Above all, a very practical advantage will have been attained by any one who, when the light clouds of Lent grow to a great darkness and hide the noonday sun over the prevailing Sacrifice, can kneel

¹ H. P. Liddon, *Some Elements of Religion*, p. 94

before the Cross with a new sense of his own immortal personality, and of the eternal issues which lie before him: who can rise from the adoration of the Crucified to say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*." ¹

¹ Cf. R. W. Church, *Human Life and its Conditions*, p. 61: "When our public service is done, then comes the time to meet ourselves alone. We have to meet ourselves in our weakness, in our ignorance, in our sin, in the awfulness and mystery of our separate existence. We hear voices speaking to us as if our personal fate were the one object of interest of the Infinite Compassion and the Eternal Love: 'Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' 'The Body which was given for *thee*—the Blood which was shed for *thee*—remember that Christ died for *thee*.' Let us not for any outward interest, tempted by the fascination of the widest thoughts and most absorbing aims, shrink from that contact with the inward discipline of our souls."

III.

THE SOCIAL INSTINCT.

“The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.”—ACTS IV. 32.

THERE are two aspects in which we may consider that separation and distinction from the world around us which belongs to our individual existence as souls living and responsible in the sight of God. There are two sides, as it were, to this mysterious truth of our self-consciousness, two points of view from which we may approach the thought of our essential independence of all created things. One side is positive, the other negative: one is in light, even in the light of God's image; the other is in darkness. We are quickened and ennobled as we look at the former; we instinctively recoil from the sight of the latter. The former is that of which I have spoken as personality, that which each one of us means when he says, “I”: the latter is the awful thought of isolation. Even as the steady discernment of our own personal existence and responsibility is required for the due unfolding of the life and

powers that make us men, so also it is true that in isolation those powers and that life can never approach towards the fulfilment of their spiritual calling and destiny. We do not need the record of God's Voice to assure us that "it is not good that the man should be alone": for knit into the very stuff of our personality, and quick with the very life of our soul, is the instinctive dread of loneliness, the deep dependence upon other souls, the craving after intercourse and communion with our fellow-men. We know, quite as surely and necessarily as we know ourselves, that it is only in fellowship with others, only in relation to beings like ourselves, that the life which belongs to us as men can find its essential exercise and development: the primary desires, the simplest judgments of our hearts, and all our noblest faculties, are concerned with and imply these relations: so that if it were possible for a man to be completely isolated from his fellows, almost all his thoughts and efforts and powers would either be repressed and die, or else be wasted on the unchanged, unanswering air, like music wandering over the rocks of a wilderness. Conscience, justice, sympathy, honour, pity, love: these are but a few of the words whose whole wealth of meaning lies in a man's dealings and communion with his fellow-men. Every principle of morality, every safeguard of reason, every canon of taste, depends for its significance, if not for its sanction,

on our position as members of a great community: the very thought of our own personality is inseparable from the existence of others like ourselves: and it was with a true and deep insight that the Greek declared that he who willingly would live in utter solitude must be either more or less than man. The social instinct is astir in the very act of self-consciousness: and any conception or principle of life which does not provide for its satisfaction need hardly be tried in order to be found wanting. I would endeavour, by God's help, to show something of the reality of the satisfaction which is offered to it in the Church of Christ. If the instinct is, as can hardly be doubted, an essential element in the health and fulness of a human life, then we may well expect to find it presumed in God's answer to the needs of man: and if it be indeed so presumed, then, in proportion as we have kept the instinctive desire keen and pure, we shall be likely to appreciate the hope and earnest of its fulfilment which is held out to us by Christianity.

There are clearly two ways¹ in which we may measure the adequacy of any communion and fellowship into which we are invited. Sympathy lives, so to

¹ Cf. Lacordaire, *Conférences de Notre-Dame de Paris*, 29^{me} Conférence; and J. Caird, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, chap. ix.

speak, in three dimensions : it has length, breadth, and depth : and we may call it great either for the extent which it can cover, or for the inner depths which it can reach. So too it may be cramped and narrow, either because it moves within a scanty range, and knows nothing beyond some close-encircling wall, or else because its diffuse activity hardly goes below the surface of life, but hurries over its vast field as lightly, if as freely, as the wind. And in correspondence with these two measurements of sympathy, there are, if we may speak very generally, two distinct ways in which the desire for communion may seek and seem to find its answer and satisfaction without reference to Christianity : two means by which this world may try to stay the imperative hunger of the social instinct.

On the one hand we may find an almost infinite scope for sympathy, and a fellowship that is practically unrestricted in extent, if we will enter generously and earnestly into the great national, or even wider life which stirs and strives around us : if we will try to share or understand the wants and hopes and aims of our generation, and to bear our part in its corporate and organic action. Probably there never was an age which offered wider range, more varied opportunity, more hopeful schemes for such an exercise and development of the social instinct. The marvellous

elaboration of the means of intercourse joins with the patient efforts of science and the industrious accumulation of statistics to bring the whole world within the ambition of our sympathy. Whatever light we have seen, whatever hope we have conceived, whatever help we have to give, we can pass at once into relation and commerce with hundreds of our fellow-men : while every day assails us with new and wider interests, and pours out before us endless means of entering, with clearer insight and appreciation, into the lives and thoughts and sufferings of unnumbered thousands whom we shall never see. Whether the feelings with which we go out into the world are mainly benevolent, political, or scientific : whether our first desire is to relieve, to control, or to classify the miseries and vices of our kind : we are at once admitted to a tract of interest and work in which the social instinct moves without the fear of limitation, and, if it could measure sympathy only by extent, might seem to find its rest for ever. It is when the other measurement is forced upon us that we feel the practical defect of a purely natural communion, however wide and intelligent, with our fellow-citizens or with mankind. Doubtless, it is incomparably nobler and happier so to live than to grope about in the pettiness of ignorance and prejudice and self-regard : but every human soul has energies, mysterious and profound, which find no exercise or

answer in that diffusive interest which is ever losing in intensity what it gains in width. We may be, we must be, enlightened, quickened, purified, ennobled by every act which takes us out of the service of self, and sets our feet in a large room, and widens our view of life: but so long as the widening intercourse and communion of our souls rests upon the purely natural basis of a mutual understanding, and depends upon our being able to enter into the natural thoughts and ways of other men, it will never satisfy a craving which is just as deep and complex as our whole moral constitution. For it has been truly said that while our inner life looks out to no horizon, in our social relations we are hemmed in on every side: in each wider range of fellowship, more of our personal feelings and convictions have to be repressed or misunderstood: as we pass from love to friendship, from friendship to acquaintance, from acquaintance to association, at each stage we feel that less of our true self is active and satisfied, that we are exchanging the full and blessed sympathy "where hearts are of each other sure," for the excitement and effectiveness of living in a crowd.

"But often in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life."¹

¹ M. Arnold, *Dramatic and Lyric Poems*, p. 112.

Yes, from the partial and superficial communion which thus beckons on and disappoints in ever-widening fields of ever more restricted feeling, most men turn to seek in friendship or in home a sympathy which has less to fear from the second measurement of which I spoke. Probably we all know the intense relief of passing from the jar or compromise of society at large into some inner sphere of a love which has been tried for years and never yet found wanting, some sheltered and fearless home where "what we mean we say, and what we would we know." Most men and women, by God's mercy, know something of such happy peace, and the blessing of a communion into which they enter without reserve or self-repression. There are some to whom we speak almost in a language of our own, with the confidence that all our broken hints are recognised with a thrill of kinship, and our half-uttered thoughts discerned and shared: some with whom we need not cramp our meaning into the dead form of an explicit accuracy, and with whom we can forecast that we shall walk together in undoubting sympathy even over tracts of taste and belief which we may never yet have touched. And having found the refreshment and confidence of such sympathy, most men come to live a double life: passing across day by day from the diffuse and shallow fellowship of the wide world to the quiet trust and

swift intercourse of the chosen few: trying to supplement the extent of one communion by the depth of the other: and gratifying the social instinct with the combined enjoyment of public life and private love: even as the great poet of our day cries—

“God be thanked, the meanest of His creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.”¹

But is this then all? Must this division always be? Must we put away for ever all thought and hope of any communion which shall be at once both wide and deep? Is this the ideal and type of human brotherhood, that we should always be trying to hold together an outer life into which we do not wholly enter, and an inner life whose entrance is concealed and barred for almost all our fellows? We know the perils which hang about such a severance of work and sympathy: the perils of mutual admiration, of scornful thoughts and words about the uninitiated, of narrowness, of self-culture and self-copying, till character is disfigured into caricature, and friendship into a slightly expanded egotism. Dangers such as these may well make us sure that the theory of life which gives them place is not the very and eternal truth which God would have us see, and strive after: that there must be a safer and simpler

¹ R. Browning, *Poetical Works*, vol. v. p. 320.

satisfaction for the craving which He has linked with the deepest movements of our spiritual life. Have we then ever heard of any fellowship which claims to overcome the severance? Is there any power which from within or from without can possibly bring the souls of men together in a sympathy without either exclusion or reserve?

“I believe in the Communion of Saints.” This is the answer of the Christian Church: she, and she alone, still clings to the hope and promise of a fellowship and sympathy which shall be at once deeper than any depth which a man can fathom in his own soul, and wider than the world itself: a brotherhood into which the most ignorant and outcast and sinful may through penitence find entrance, a brotherhood in which the most sensitive and thoughtful and exacting soul shall never feel or fear the touch of cruelty or stupidity, but ever be led on from height to height, from strength to strength, from glory to glory, by the answer of a love which never is out of sight, and yet never can be outstripped. Clearly, if there is any warrant for the promise of such a communion, if it has any earnest or analogy which can bring it within the range of our aspiration, if we can see even dimly how it might be reached and realized within the Church of Christ, then the very offer of the hope should stir in us a sense of

welcome and obedience, as we recognize the foreshadowed fulfilment of an instinct which we may have enfeebled and misused, but cannot wholly repudiate or destroy. By what means then does the Church propose to make good her promise of a sympathy both wide and deep? By what links does she connect with our daily life her faith in the Communion of Saints?

Must we look back, brethren, for the plainest answer to these questions to the days of which the text was written: the days when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul"? It is, in deed and truth, a humiliating necessity which forces Churchmen thus to turn away from the outward aspect of their own times, from the divisions and distrust which have broken in upon the Kingdom of God, and to seek in earlier ages the *clearer* manifestation of the Communion of Saints. But still we cannot doubt for a moment that the Divine spirit of that Communion is with us now: we know that, for all the noisy and obtrusive quarrels which are the shame and plague of a divided Christendom, the strong love which held together the souls of Martyrs and Evangelists, the love which was stronger than death, is among us still: that in pure homes, in the fellowship of Christ's work among the poor and suffering, in many a crowded parish and lonely mission station, we can still see, in the perfect

harmony of self-forgetful work, the inherited secret of Christian unity and the earnest of its achievement in the Church triumphant. Even now the forecast peace is only veiled from those who will not look below the surface, who will not watch for its signs in quiet and Christlike lives of unnoticed service and of silent faith. Let us try to think of lives so quickened and harmonized, or of that deep sympathy which could efface in the Apostolic Church the strong lines of severance between Jew and Gentile, between bond and free, while we look for the means by which Christianity invites us to enter into the Communion of Saints.

I would not try to speak in this short space of that mysterious work whereby through the hidden efficacy of Sacraments and by the power of the Holy Ghost, we may be, for all our unworthiness, filled with the very Life of Him Who died for all, and caught up into the oneness of His Body Mystical. That work is true and real and actual: but it is not briefly to be spoken of: perhaps it will not always bear the restraint of human utterance. But there is one plain ground of fellowship which lies so near to the experience of our daily life, that it is easy for all to see and measure. For at the outset, Christianity, and Christianity alone, sets before us all *One Lord*. Alike in earth and Heaven we are to be brought into the true fellowship one with another

by a service and devotion which is not mutual but common: by seeking first the same Lord and Saviour. The real secret of sympathy is to love in the first place, not one's friend, but that which he loves better than himself: and the fulfilment of the social instinct is found in the concentration of all hearts upon the One true God. And surely this, strange as it may at first appear, is the plain indorsement of our own experience. It is not in mutual admiration, in the private interchange of regard and care, in loving those who first love us, that we attain the purest intensity of devotion and communion. It is in community of service, in fellowship of the same whole-hearted work, in eager striving towards the same unselfish hope.

So is it in our homes: we unlearn all partiality, all selfish preference and self-willed affection, we enter within the veil, and read the mysteries of love, in proportion as our hearts are set upon one common aim. And so it is that sometimes sickness, with its quick concentration of all interests in one room, upon one life and hope, can knit a home together with a sympathy unknown before, and teach to all who will the secret of all true communion.

So is it also in the wider ranges of our life. It is surely true that men are really drawn together and taught to co-operate with generous trustfulness, not by

a good-natured acquiescence in the ways and wishes of others, not by a diffusive zeal to gratify their fellows, but by the concentration of their lives upon one faith and hope, and by the service of the same enthusiasm. It is this which sets and holds their hearts in sympathy; this which overcomes the sinful instinct of distrust, and washes away the barriers of self-regard: even as it is this which is deformed and wasted in the violence of party-feeling.

But if thus we find the unlooked-for blessing of mutual trust growing we know not how out of our common allegiance to any earthly object, how can we measure the love which might spread from heart to heart if all were wholly set upon the selfsame Lord Who ever pours towards all the selfsame everlasting Love? We shall better understand what the Communion of Saints may be, in proportion as we can give our hearts, our strength, our lives, to Him Who gave Himself for us—to Him Who, since He was lifted up from the earth, alone can draw all to Himself, and link them in the one sufficient sympathy of one unending Love. For “if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another”: even as “this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.” It was with such a hope that the great Christian artists painted the joys of the

united Church in Paradise: where all the Saints, as they wander among the glories of their home, are ever looking away from the dear companions of their peace and gazing only upon Him Who has redeemed them by His Blood: finding in that concentration of all their thoughts and all their love the perfect fulfilment of His promise and their hope, in the unhindered communion of their unnumbered hosts.

IV.

THE REASONABLENESS OF LIFE.

“The appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.”—2 TIM. I. 10.

THE letter from which these words are taken is one which no thoughtful man can read without the deepest interest : for it was written under circumstances which might give authority and attraction to the words even of the least original and effective among us : and the writer certainly was not lacking in the very highest qualities of a teacher. St. Paul is a prisoner at Rome, charged with offences which involve the unfailing indictment of high treason : as a Christian he will probably find his case complicated by the rumours which have issued from Nero's court as to the origin of the late ruinous fire : and he is daily expecting to be taken from his prison to his death. The time has come which must test the entire sincerity and self-knowledge with which he said some nine years ago

by the sea-side at Miletus, "Bonds and afflictions abide me: but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself":—and this letter makes it clear that those words owed none of their strength to the impulse of rhetoric or excitement. For St. Paul is neither frightened nor excited by the near approach of his painful death: he neither dreads nor denies the strain which suffering and loneliness can exert: he feels that for one younger than himself and less versed in the trials and triumphs of faith, such violence as has lately broken out upon the Church at Rome may be almost more than he can face without flinching. And so—since, like his Master, having loved his own which are in the world, he loves them unto the end—he writes from his prison to his own son in the faith, and he shares with Timothy the thoughts and hopes which he feels to be the secret of his quietude. They are told with the steady simplicity of one who feels that what he has to say is at once certain and sufficient: the letter is in utter contrast with that appearance of theatrical effect which in some later martyrdoms jarred on M. Aurelius' delicate taste in heroism: indeed, at times it descends to matters of personal convenience, and might seem to teach us little more than a lesson in common sense at critical times. For instance, the sentence may be deferred till after the

winter; and, if so, St. Paul will want the cloke that he left at Troas: he is anxious to have some books, but especially some parchments, whether for his own use or for the instruction of those whom he can no longer teach by word of mouth: there are messages to be sent, and news to be told of common friends, of their loyalty or failure: and twice St. Paul recurs to his great longing to see his dear son once again: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me": to "come before winter." But this may not be possible: and so the main tenor of the letter is to say good-bye. Its tone is touched with the sober graces of the evening and the autumn: it lingers round the thoughts and ways of life by which men put away the fear of dying: it strives to fix for ever in the young Bishop's mind those principles and views of public and private conduct which will not break down or need to be modified even in the last days and the perilous times, even in persecution and the hour of death.

It is natural that one who writes thus should lay some stress upon the doctrine of the Resurrection, and that he who had told the Corinthians, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain," should, as he looks to the supreme trial of faith, realize and declare the supreme and unique significance of this truth. And so, not only in the general tenor of the letter, but also

expressly in several passages, St. Paul shows with how vivid and masterful a power the communion of the Risen Lord, and the promise of eternal life with Him, had entered and occupied His servant's soul. And I would try, by God's grace, first to show in what sense this power has been historically exercised by Christianity, and how life and immortality were really, as the text asserts, brought to light through the Gospel: and then to say something of the evidence which is rendered and reflected, as it were, to the Creed of the Church from the world which it has thus affected. Briefly, I would ask you to consider first whether Christianity has succeeded in satisfying man's instinctive longing for a revelation of eternal life? And if it has, whether this success is any argument for its truth?

It may at first be thought that in the words of the text St. Paul has overstated the originality of his Gospel in its doctrine of immortality. For, on the one hand, we find the tokens of firm belief in a life beyond the grave among the very lowest savages: it is shown in their legends, in their accounts of dreams, in their customs of burial:—and, on the other hand, we are familiar with the glorious forecasts by which, long before our Saviour's Advent, both Greeks and Jews discerned what lay behind the unrent

veil of death, and declared by faith that they desired a better country, and the city which God had prepared for them. But St. Paul does not, could not, deny that the expectation of an eternal life and the suspicion of immortality were astir among men before Christ rose from the dead, the first-fruits of them that slept: what he does claim is that through the Gospel of the Resurrection God has brought the truth to light, and substituted for the shifting glimpses, the twilight hope, the unfinished prophecy of the past, a fact as stable as his prison walls, a fact which brings immortality itself into the broad light of day, and sets it, for those who believe that Christ is risen, among the steadiest axioms of life. He is satisfied that his eyes have seen the Form, his ears have heard the Voice of One Who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore: he believes that all his needs are known, all his thoughts read, all his labours watched, all his prayers heard, by One like himself, save only for his sins, One Who was in earth, and now looks down from Heaven: and by that belief the immortality of his own soul is carried beyond the approach of doubt:—"I know," he says, "Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." The expectation of a future life had indeed long been in the world: but it had been a very

different thing from this. In the infantile mind of the savage it had been little more than the mere inability to imagine how he could cease to be; it cost him less effort to think of the present as continuing than as stopping: he had not fancy or energy enough to conceive an end.¹ It was impossible that a state of mind so purely negative should long take rank as an expectation among civilized men: in their higher and more active souls it must either become positive or pass away. It does become positive to the Greek and to the Jew: but at the same time it loses something of that unfaltering certainty with which it swayed the savage. To the wisest of the Greeks it appears as a belief which he is disposed to accept, partly in consequence of his high opinion of the dignity of man, partly on the ground of practical expediency;² and there is a striking contrast between the clear hope of the prisoner of Jesus Christ as he waits for martyrdom, and the equal courage with which Socrates, doomed to die by as unjust a sentence, quietly weighs the balance of probabilities, either that death may be such a change that the dead man is nothing, or that it may chance to be a migration of the soul into another place.³ And

¹ Cf. S. Baring-Gould, *Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, i. 70, 71.

² Cf. Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, chap. viii. *ad fin.*

³ Plato, *Apologia Socratis*, chap. xxxii.

even for the Jew, though God had borne into his heart the hope of an everlasting salvation, and a long life, even for ever and ever: though Job knows that from his flesh he shall behold God, and Asaph cries that when flesh and heart fail God is the strength of his heart and his portion for ever: yet still the hope is growing towards the perfect day: still the great prophecy remains unverified: still, to borrow a vivid metaphor, the further pier of the bridge which spans the whole of life rests upon that unseen shore from which in all the generations of the past no traveller has returned,¹ no voice been heard: and when the darkness of that strange land has seemed to gather round him, even David wonders "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?" even Hezekiah cries to God, "The grave cannot praise Thee; death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth."

But for St. Paul all this is changed. He has seen and loved and communed with One Who being raised from the dead dieth no more: the dominion of death is ended for ever: and through the Gospel Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light. He feels that a new power is come into the world of thought: that the Resurrection of the Crucified has achieved, as

¹ Cf. J. B. Mozley, *University Sermons*, p. 56.

it were, not only the dethronement of death, but also the coronation of a hope, of whose dominion there shall be no end: that the speculations of philosophy and the religious aspirations of Judaism have given place to a revelation which will have power to ennoble and control the lives of rich and poor, of learned and unlearned, with the assurance of an eternal issue. And, beyond dispute, brethren, his forecast has in history proved true. Whatever Christianity has done, or failed to do, this at least we need not fear to claim for it: that it has availed to plant the belief of our immortality among the deepest and most general convictions of our race: that it has borne even into the least imaginative hearts the unfailing hope of a pure and glorious life beyond the death of the body: that it has shot through our language, our literature, our customs, and our moral ideas the searching light of a judgment to come and the quickening glory of a promised Heaven; that it has sustained and intensified this hope through countless changes of thought and feeling in centuries of quickest intellectual development: and that it is now impossible to conceive the force which could dislodge from so many million hearts the axiom which they have learned from the Gospel of the Resurrection.

But is there in this achievement any evidence that that Gospel is true? Let us seek some answer to this question.

And first, may not this be said with truth: that there are some conceptions of our life, of ourselves, and of this present world, which, as moral beings, we have no right to entertain? They may seem merely abstract theories; and sophists may find much to say for them: but every healthy taste detects their quality with an instinct of repugnance, and knows that their rejection is at once a natural impulse and a moral duty. We have no right, for instance, to entertain, still less to impart, the theory that there is any sin which men cannot avoid, any vice which they had better practise: we have no right to say to ourselves or others that our humanity is naturally vile or brutal. For views such as these are, by the clear sentence of our own hearts, insulting, degrading, paralysing to the nature and the life we share: they drag us down from the rank in which we were born: and we have no more right to hold them than we have to renounce the exercise and responsibility of any social influence, any intellectual power, any delicacy of feeling with which we find ourselves endowed. Conscience can condemn a thought as distinctly and authoritatively as it can an act: and there are abstract views of ourselves and our life which can only be accepted by doing ruinous violence to the moral sense.

Such, and so criminal, is or would be the belief that

this present life is all unreal and meaningless, a thing to be mocked at or despised as silly and abortive: as though all its interests and issues, even when they seem most free and hopeful, were really in the relentless grip of a blind or cruel force, and its government or anarchy, with all that we call law and right and reason, a mere amusement for some scornful spectator of our manifold delusion. We have no right, even in thought, so to jeer at ourselves: no man, being rational and moral, may think so meanly of his manhood. The strength and truth of our recoil from such a thought is seen in our deep instinct of poetic justice: it is, as Aristotle said, repulsive, disgusting to us, that by the final issue of the plot the faultless hero should be left in misery, the vilest characters rewarded:¹ the drama is to us a little world, a little summary of all time: and we, in the name of morality and reason, demand that it shall either present, or point towards, a righteous end. And practically no sane man can steadily thus scorn the world or his own life. Beneath all earnest thought and work there lies the profound conviction that the main lines of human life are reasonable and righteous: that there is in it a power, a tendency, with which good men can co-operate, allying with it, entrusting to it, the hope and effort of their lives: that diligence and

¹ Cf. *Arist. Poet.*, ch. xiii. 2.

patience and self-discipline are not a mere waste of time, which might be spent in obvious pleasures, but are rather in harmony with a principle or a will, which through all the apparent confusion of the world is steadily moving towards an assured fulfilment, and a victory which will somehow justify and crown the trust and toil of those who have striven to live rightly. And we, brethren, know that this voice of the people is also a Voice of God: we recognize it as our nature's evidence that God is good, and God is King: we welcome and rest on it as the revelation of His Will in Whom we live and move and have our being.

We live then, we go on working, upon the belief that the main and dominant element in life is reasonable and righteous: it is a belief which morality inculcates as a duty; without which effort and progress are words drained of all meaning. But does this world, indeed, display the character which we are thus forced to impute to it, if all the issues of a human life are finished, all its drama played, its accounts all balanced, and its story closed, when the frail body dies; if life and immortality indeed have not been brought to light? Without staying at present to lay stress on those parts and relations in every man's life, which would be stultified and degraded into insignificance or absurdity by such a supposition, let us only think for a minute how many

souls there are within, say, half a mile of this place for whom, if all the issues of their life lay on this side of the grave, this world would seem neither reasonable nor righteous, but rather a house of cruel and thankless bondage, whither they have been sent for a few dull or bitter years, to be mocked with fading hopes, and to look at pleasures while they lived in pains. We may lay but a light hold on the promise of eternal life if this world seems to us a pleasant place of interest and congenial work and tasteful leisure: if we are fond of books, and have time to read them: and if our moral nature can turn from time to time to try the relief and luxury of doing good. But there are unnumbered souls for whom only the hope which Christianity has given them can justify the patient continuance of life, or arrest the quick growth of disappointment towards despair and madness.

It was suggested not long ago by a thoughtful writer in the *Spectator* that even in Agnosticism there might be the impulse of persecution: and that possibly those who had themselves dismissed religion from their lives might forbid or oppose its practice by others, as prejudicial to dispassionate study, and on the ground that "that way madness lies." Surely mankind at large, or certainly the poor and suffering, know better than the Agnostic where lies the true safeguard of their sanity.

There is a stubborn argument in favour of His truth Who has brought life and immortality to light, which we may take in the words of the poor dying factory-girl in the tale: "I think if this should be the end of all; and if all I have been born for is just to work my heart and life away in this dree place, with those mill-stones in my ears for ever, until I could scream out for them to stop and let me have a little quiet: with my mother gone, and I never able to tell her again how I loved her, and of all my troubles,—I think, if this life is the end, and that there is no God to wipe away all tears from all eyes, I could go mad."¹

¹ *North and South*, by Mrs. Gaskell. Quoted by Dr. Newman in the *Grammar of Assent*, p. 312.

V.

THE LOVE OF BEAUTY :

(1) *IN NATURE.*¹

“ And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold,
it was very good.”—GENESIS I. 31.

IN these most simple and mysterious words we are plainly told that in the beginning the Creator of this world delighted in the beauty of its outward form. He approved it not only as fit for the material development which He had designed for it, fit for the ages of change, the course of history which should be enacted on it: but also as outwardly delightful. He saw His work, and, behold, to sight it was very good. It was good, not only as satisfying the purpose of His mercy for those whom He would place there, not only as apt

¹ The thought from which this sermon starts will be familiar to those who know Dr. Mozley's sermon upon “ Nature ” in his volume of *University Sermons*. It has been followed out with great power in a book referred to below, *The Natural Theology of Natural Beauty*, by R. St. John Tyrwhitt.

to minister to their life and growth: but also as a visible expression of the eternal beauty, and therefore pleasing even to the Eye of God. Apart from all the uses it would serve, its outward aspect was in harmony with a certain Divine law: and for this Almighty God judged that it was very good.

If men would only look frankly at the first chapter of Genesis, without either timidity or injustice, it would surely seem very strange to find this simple and complete anticipation of a thought which, though it has been astir in the world for many centuries, has only in the last few years received its due emphasis and its logical force. I mean the thought that our delight in the visible beauty of this world can only be explained by the belief that the world has in some way been made to give us this delight by a Being Who Himself knows what beauty is: and that the beauty of Nature is a real communication made to us concerning the Mind and Will that is behind Nature. The argument has quite lately been stated with great skill and grace in a book entitled *The Natural Theology of Natural Beauty*, the author, Mr. Tyrwhitt, following in the main the lines marked out by Professor Ruskin in his *Modern Painters*, and by Dr. Mozley in his endlessly suggestive sermon upon Nature. And it is an argument which, so far as it goes, will bear any weight

we like to put upon it. For all the real business of the universe, all the changes and energies which sustain and advance our life upon the earth, might plainly have gone on quite well without making any appeal to our emotions. The sun might have risen and set, the succession of seasons might have been ensured, and the requisite food brought out of the fields, without any suggestion to us of wonder or delight or praise. All the mechanism of provision for our physical life might have worked smoothly and successfully, with no more thought or hint of beauty than we may find in a factory or a ploughing-machine. But, as we know, the case is wholly otherwise:—Nature does much more for us than merely to give us board and lodging. Over and above the daily sustenance of our life we receive from her a constant series of delightful and ennobling thoughts and feelings: the great and costly labours which enable us to live, present us also with a magnificent and thrilling spectacle: and Nature—as has been said in very memorable words,—in the very act of labouring as a machine, is also sleeping as a picture.¹

We have then a right to say that the quality or character which can thus speak and appeal to our spirit must have been engendered in this visible world by a spiritual Being able and willing to enter into

¹ Mozley's *University Sermons*, p. 123.

communion with us, and knowing what would affect and raise our thoughts. When we receive and read a letter, we are sure that it has come from some one who knew our language and could write it. When we listen to a beautiful piece of music we are sure that the composer had either a theoretic or at least a practical acquaintance with the laws and the effects of harmony. And when at the sight of a great landscape, rich and quiet in the chaste glory of the autumn, or glad with the bright promise, the fearless freedom of the spring, our whole heart is filled with happiness, and every sense seems touched with something of a pleasure that was meant for it, and all words are utterly too poor to praise the sight:—then surely, by as good an argument, we must say that, through whatever ways and means, the world received its outward aspect by the Will of some Being Who knew the law and truth of beauty. It does not matter, so far as this inference is concerned, how the result has been attained, or how many ages and thousands of secondary causes are traced between the beginning of the work and its present aspect: it is beautiful now: it now speaks to us in a language which our spirits understand: and, however long ago, and in whatever way, only a spiritual Being could have taught it so to speak. Whatever Creation means, the world was created by One Who could delight

in beauty:—whenever its Author looked out upon His work He must have seen that it was very good.

There is, I think, no refuge from this argument save in the denial that there is any such thing as natural beauty: and it is really too late in the history of human thought for this denial to claim much attention from practical men. The philosopher who says that my enjoyment of a great sunset is only a diffused stimulation of the nervous system, largely due to the hunting propensities with which our savage ancestors sought their prey towards nightfall in the woods and streams, may know, perhaps, what he himself is talking about: but it certainly is not in any sense the same thing that I feel. We need not stay to prove the reality of beauty, or to be sure of its power to move our hearts and raise our thoughts. It may perhaps be more worth while to ask why it is that natural beauty fails so often to lead men nearer to the God of Nature and the Uncreated Beauty: or what is the pre-requisite temper for those who are to hear and understand the spiritual appeal of the great sights which are about them.

In some degree, it would seem, the witness of visible beauty to the things of Faith is weakened or imperilled for those who live in great cities. Not indeed that there is any real force in the shallow and irreverent saying that God made the country and man made the

town. Almighty God, the Guide and Goal of all humanity, leaves not Himself without witness in any phase through which He leads our history, or in any conditions among which He bids us serve Him: the splendid courage, the wakeful energy, the network of mutual dependence and quick co-operation, the infinite inventiveness, the dominion over all physical forces which belong to the life of such a city as this, have at least as great a place in natural theology, and bear as true a witness to Him Who is upholding all things by the word of His power, as the quiet charm of an English village or the magnificence of an Alpine range. There is in the Bible no word of disparagement for the life of cities: a Holy City is the centre of its chosen scenery; its highest hopes are set upon a City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God: and, let us remember, it is not Sion, the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth, that suffers by comparison with the lilies of the field, but only Solomon, in all his glory, the selfish glory of a vain and sinful court. Yes, it is in the luxury, the vanity, the unreality of our high civilization, rather than in the real life and work of London, that we may grow deaf to the appeal of natural beauty and blind to the revelation of the mystic heaven and earth. It is our own little and unworthy thoughts, our pre-occupation with the details

of fashion and society, our intense interest in ourselves, rather than any uncomeliness of streets and houses, that makes us careless about the moving splendour and the spiritual aspect of the world we live in: we are straitened in ourselves rather than in our surroundings. True, we may miss many of the glories that are day by day revealed about a country home; we may spend most of our hours in the dingy atmosphere of narrow streets: but we may, if we will, attain a degree of alertness and appreciation which is very rare in rustic minds: and one sight there is, perhaps the greatest pageant Nature ever shows, which comes as gloriously about our life as in the wildest scenery. Over all places alike, it has been well said, the great sun begins his state and ends it in formless, inaccessible glory. That wonderful sight appeals to us quite as forcibly in the desolations of civilization as in those of Nature. Here in London, "once or twice in the twenty-four grey hours of darkness visible and night without peace, there comes forty minutes or so of strange, incongruous glory; and all may see it. The exterior of life has been penal and hideous all day, but suddenly, and for a time, it is proclaimed that there is glory and there is rest." Surely we need not miss the evidence of natural beauty even in the greatest city of the world: we may

¹ R. St. John Tyrwhitt, *Natural Theology, etc.*, p. 136.

go forth to our work and to our labour until the evening: but at eventide there may be light: and here too we may see the work which God has made, and enter into communion with Him as we confess that it is very good.

But, at the worst, the engrossing activity, the distracting interests of a great city will but interrupt or delay our recognition of the beauty of nature and our attention to her message. There is another tendency of our age which threatens to lead the very faculty of delight in beauty far away from all that Nature offers for its exercise, and to gratify it with strange and curious pleasures, quite apart from all that God has given it. Whatever praise may be justly claimed for the school of taste, which is popularly called æsthetic, it cannot be denied that the beauty which it cultivates and enjoys is very often entirely distinct from the natural beauty of the visible world. It may surround us with delicate shades of colour and restful effects of harmony: but the glow and grace of the work is essentially artificial: we must go apart from the outside world to surrender ourselves to its glamour. Its highest achievement is a palace of art, where nothing should jar on the quiet colours, chastened almost to sadness, and all should contribute to express some elaborate conception of recondite taste. Its favourite

praise implies that this is so: for subtlety is the very contrary of the frankness, the universal appeal, the un-studied charm of natural beauty: and in contrast with the subtle tones of this new renaissance, the simplicity of the outer world seems glaring and noisy. As one turns away, for instance, from the last two rooms of the present Exhibition at Burlington House,¹ whether one leaves them with a sense of regret or of relief, the change is like coming out of a dream into the hard but healthy reality of actual life, or like emerging from a hothouse, fragrant with the heavy scent of exotic flowers, into the bracing freshness of the common air. The work which we have left may be attractive, skilful, imaginative, difficult in the very highest degree: but all its beauty lies apart from Nature, and apart from all that she offers for the brightness and gladness of men's lives: it is esoteric, exquisite, a subtle pleasure for the few.—But surely there is a real danger in thus leading our taste away from all which is its natural delight, and training it to a constant gratification with artificial charms. The beauty which is achieved may indeed be rare and delicate: but it calls the soul away from the great world, away from the “joy in widest commonalty spread,” away from that beauty which God called very good. The mind with which we thus are brought in

¹ In which were gathered at this time (1883) a collection of Mr. Rossetti's pictures.

contact may be ingenious and very powerful, but its works have a note that sounds far away from the Mind which made the sunrise and sunset to be the world-wide tokens of its glory, and set the bow in the clouds as the pledge of world-wide love. We may gain much that is charming, and thoughtful, and splendid, from the study of this modern art: but all the while we are moving further from the revelation which has held and surpassed the praise of psalmists and prophets, the revelation which brought Job out of his great trial to penitence and blessing: that vast and ceaseless revelation of the one true beauty—

“ Which can intertwine for us
 The passions that build up our human soul,
 Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
 But with high objects, with enduring things,
 With life and nature ; purifying thus
 The elements of feeling and of thought,
 And sanctifying by such discipline
 Both pain and fear,—until we recognise
 A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.”¹

Lastly, but above all, if we are to receive from the visible beauty of the world all that it can reveal to us concerning Him Who made and praised it, we must draw near to it with watchful obedience to His own condition for so great a blessing: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” It was nobly said by the founder of inductive science, that for entrance

¹ Wordsworth, “Influence of Natural Objects.”

into the kingdom of knowledge as for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, men must become as little children. They must draw near with free and humble hearts if they are to enter into the mysteries of natural science: they must not dictate to Nature, or assert themselves in her presence: they must come to her with affectionate attention to wait upon her self-revealing. And this, the true temper of the student of her inner laws, is also the only temper for the true lover of her outward aspect: the beauty, as well as the truth of nature, is often hidden from the wise and prudent that it may be revealed to babes. Nature will not be inquired of at all by those who set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: or if they get from her any answer, it has too often been an answer according to the multitude of their idols. Men may turn to her in the mere indolence of luxury, leaving all the serious duties and responsibilities of their proper place, to loiter through unclouded days among her richest wealth of beauty; and in the delight and softness of a southern coast, they have their reward:—but they are conscious of no spiritual appeal in all those glorious sights. Others may seek in the ever-changing charm of Nature a heightened and intenser life, a more vivid consciousness of self, a fresh flush of excitement or passion; and they have their reward: but it is not the blessing with which God has charged the

beauty of this world. And some have even turned to Nature in rebellion against God: setting themselves, by the help of the creature, to strengthen their hearts against the Creator: trying to fill with the enjoyment of visible beauty the heart which He made for Himself, and from which they have dethroned Him: and it is only a miracle of His patient mercy that may find them even where they hide from Him, and recall them even in the house of their idol.—But day by day the pure in heart shall see Him, following on to know the Lord in the beauty and glory of His works. As they look out upon the world, with contrite sorrow for the sins that break its harmony and peace, with humble recognition that they are not worthy of the least of all God's mercies, only longing that no earth-born cloud may utterly hide Him from them, and thankful for each dim revealing of His goodness and His beauty, the simplest scenes about them seem to find a voice for them, and Nature more and more receives them to her confidence: more and more the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; until the things that are seen seem as a robe which half expresses and half hides the eternal and invisible glory, and the uncreated beauty almost smiles through the created veil, and God sends forth His light and His truth to be their guides unto His Holy Hill and to His dwelling.

VI.

THE LOVE OF BEAUTY :

(2) *IN ART.*

“How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty.”

ZECHARIAH IX. 17.

“He hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.”

ISAIAH LIII. 2.

THERE can be little doubt that the eyes of those who wrote these words were turned towards the same horizon, and striving to descry the self-same object. In spite of the two centuries which sever them, in spite of the transforming discipline of the captivity which in that interval had seized upon the soul of Israel, and wrenched the course of its history as the desolating violence of sorrow sometimes stays and saves a life, still Zechariah is looking where Isaiah looked, and his hand is pointing to the same mysterious light. The two prophets are as men who from two distant hills are watching across foregrounds widely different, and through different veils of shifting mist, the growing glory of the same approaching dawn.

Isaiah may have started in these chapters of his prophecy from a general and typical conception of the

people of Israel, as the servant of Jchovah, sent into the world to do His Will, and bear witness to His Name, and to rise out of desolation and hatred to an eternal excellency as a joy of many generations: but soon that broken and uncertain outline has changed into a form so distinct and individual, designated by features and experience so essentially personal, that no criticism can resolve it into a figurative and collective idealization:¹ and the Ethiopian Eunuch, as he read this chapter with the simple insight of a good and able mind, felt the only doubt which can justly be entertained with regard to its subject, when he asked: "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself or of some other man?" Somewhat similarly, in the latter half of this ninth chapter, Zechariah passes from the promise that God will protect His people and His house, when Tyre and Ashkelon and Gaza shall fall before the armies of Macedon, and rises to a height from which this nearer future seems dim and miniature, like the villages which glisten in the middle distance of an Alpine view; and on the firm lines of the farthest range he sees One coming with His Feet upon the untrodden snow, and His Form distinct against the depths of Heaven: it is the King Whose royalty has been but faintly forecast in the past history of

¹ Cf. Delitzsch on Isaiah xlii. 1.

Israel: it is the Saviour of Whose deliverance the exodus from Egypt or from Babylon has been but a pale and transient glimpse: it is He Who shall speak peace unto the heathen, and Whose dominion shall be from the Mediterranean to the unvisited Ocean of the East, from the Euphrates to the mysterious ends of the West: and it is with the vision of this advent that the prophet cries—"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee:" and—"how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!"—Thus both prophets urge the faith of their contemporaries far beyond the narrow range of imminent peril and deliverance, and would bear into their hearts the certain and definite expectation of One Whose Person and work should at once explain the life and realize the hopes of His people, even where these seemed most strangely inconsistent. For though in the servant of the Lord, Isaiah foretells no beauty that we should desire Him, while the King whom Zechariah sees is fairer than the children of men, yet this is but one instance of that strange and sudden contrast which was embraced within the Messianic hope of Israel.

It might seem to us almost incredible—though it is indeed indisputable—that the same men did passionately cherish expectations thus contradictory concerning

the same object of their stedfast hope; we might be positive that no ideal could include and blend these opposite traits of humiliation and magnificence, of contempt and adoration, of death and conquest: were it not that history has set before us from our childhood the actual fulfilment of both lines of prophecy, and the solution of their contrast in the Life and Death and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour. We may be indeed so familiar with the solution that we have almost ceased to be conscious of the contrast: we may read the ninth chapter of Isaiah upon Christmas Day, and the fifty-third upon Good Friday, and hardly pay the tribute of wonder to the astounding courage of the heart, which could hold, and love, and live by them both, until the fulness of time should make both one in the Person of Jesus Christ: until the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace, the King in His Beauty should come, as Zechariah had foretold, lowly, and riding upon an ass: should come to be despised and rejected of men, wounded, bruised, oppressed, afflicted, dumb: brought as a lamb to the slaughter and cut off out of the land of the living: to have His grave assigned with the wicked, and after His Death with the rich man: that thus He might see of the travail of His soul and divide the spoil with the strong: and that all the ends of the earth might see the salvation of our God.

Let us fix our thoughts on one example of that contrast which inspired prophecy and the life of Christ have thus agreed to reconcile. It is decisively expressed in the contradictory words of Zechariah and Isaiah: the former heralding the King of Sion as One Whose beauty should surpass the utmost praise of human words or thoughts: the latter declaring that those who should see that self-same Christ, should find in Him no beauty that they should desire Him.

I would try to suggest something, however faintly and poorly, in regard to the actual fulfilment of both prophecies in the claims addressed to our sense of beauty, by the revelation of Christianity; believing that there is a deep meaning in that strange and blended force of stern restraint and irresistible charm which this sense has so often owned in the Presence of the Crucified; and hoping to show that this too is an instinct of our human nature, which, if we suffer it to act in sincerity and truth, will find its rest for ever in the Person of its Redeemer.

Let us, then, notice first that the prophecy of Isaiah is, if we take it alone and superficially, in accord with much that has been lately written or implied about the influence of Christianity upon the genius of Art. For we are sometimes told, and more often made to feel, that there is something irksome and hindering to the

free appreciation and enjoyment of beauty, in those dogmas about the conditions and issues of human life, which are inseparable from the work of our Lord. We are familiar with graceful expressions of regret for that simple and happy and trustful communion with Nature, which is said to have been the privilege of Paganism: the indestructible health of the old world has been displaced, we are told, by our severance between flesh and spirit, our unnatural suspicion of natural pleasures: by some the traditions of Judaism, by others the monastic and ascetic perverseness of the middle ages, by others the gloom of Calvinism is said to have come between mankind and their due delight in the grace and passion of this world. In various ways it is suggested or proclaimed that Christianity has unduly and too long presumed to thrust its doctrines between the human soul and the beauty which is about it, and disturbed that free entrance into the pleasures of sight and sound, through which every energy might go out to find its satisfaction and its rapture. And so some have already returned to feed and foster their sense of beauty by the works and thoughts of those who lived before this tyrannous restraint was preached: others are looking forward to a time when Art may avail itself of the triumph of scepticism, and renounce all hindering allegiance and

regard to the discredited formulæ of religion: while many more are conscious of a vague expectation that the life of passion henceforward will and should be freer and fuller than it has been: that hitherto we have been unnecessarily cautious and sober in our pleasures, and timidly patient of undue restrictions: but that now all is going to be much more passionate and unfettered and absorbing, and that, by the pursuit of Art for Art's sake, we enter into an earthly paradise, which has at length been relieved from certain gloomy and old-fashioned regulations, and in which it may now be hoped that our sense of beauty will be a law unto itself. And in this temper very many who little know the consistent significance of their choice are falling in with a course of life and thought which has, as a whole, turned away from the Cross of Jesus Christ, and shaken off the light yoke and easy burden of our Lord and Master: turned away from the lesson of His Sacrifice, and His wounds and bruises, and the Visage marred more than any man: turned away to seek elsewhere the full desire of their eyes, because He hath, as He dies for us, no form nor comeliness, and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

For in truth there is a challenge and a law with which Christianity must ever meet the lover of beauty as he goes out to seek by whatever way the gratifica-

tion of this sense. The Church of Christ cannot, while she remembers her Master, her message, and her trust, consent to be dismissed from the sphere of taste, or let it be thought that she has no counsel for her sons, as they turn to those high and thrilling pleasures, no means or right of judging the tone and the ideals of contemporary Art. And if at first there seems to be a shadow of discouragement and severity in her bearing, if her words fall with an unwelcome hint of unsuspected dangers, if some are inclined to go back and walk no more with her; still she knows that this is no new thing; that the offence of the Cross is not likely to disappear in this world; and that her King in His beauty has often seemed to have no form nor comeliness.

There was shown in London lately, a picture,¹ which, if we can remember or imagine it, may help our conception of the bearing of Christianity upon the artistic temper. In the rich and delicate glory of the mediaeval life of Italy, a company of wedding-guests are coming down the street, glad and graceful with the quick, laughing, generous sense of health and youth and happiness. They move with that instinctive charm of unquestioning enjoyment which seems caught from Nature's brightest and most helpful moods, in the

¹ By Mr. Frank Dicksee.

sweetness and light of a southern city. But just as the bride and bridegroom, happy in themselves, in each other, and in all the kindly circumstance of life, step lightly out from under an archway into the welcome of the sunshine, an old man, cowering by the side of the street, poor, and feeble, and uncomely, stretches out his hand to offer them for sale—a Crucifix. There is no necessary implication of rebuke in the contrast, no reason shown why the bridal company should stay, or go less gladly to the feast: He Who hangs upon the Cross wrought His first miracle to keep up the joy of such a day: still there the contrast is—on the one hand, the free and exuberant happiness of youth and wealth and love and beauty: on the other—the old man, dull, squalid, joyless, friendless, near to death: already doomed, it may be, never to feel another pleasure coming through the avenues of sense: and in his feeble hand the image of the Son of Man, the Sinless, the Incarnate Love, desolate and dying in shame and agony that He may save His people from their sins.

The first appeal and influence of such a contrast upon the hearts of most men, and, by God's grace, of almost all women, has perhaps no proper force in logic: it can be met and driven back by general considerations and consistent arguments: but it is not altogether

without sanction or moral value. It seems analogous to that suggestion of our Blessed Lord which sent the Scribes and Pharisees in silence from the Temple, and saved the woman taken in adultery: it comes closer still to the outward form of Abraham's unanswered answer across the great and impassable gulf: "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things."

There is an illogical force in such sights and words which we may sometimes, in particular cases, do well to resist, but to which very few men, if any, can without deep loss and risk become habitually insensible. For we all know that the greater part of our growth and education in all the higher ways of life depends upon our faithful attention to feelings which we cannot define, to signs which are not certain, and arguments which are not irresistible. And probably many of us would live nobler lives if, in matters where only our own pleasure or profit is concerned, we were more sensitive and obedient to some of our less logical instincts and suspicions. But underneath this first vague effect of the contrast between the general aspect of our Saviour's Life on earth, and the unhindered gratification of the sense of beauty, there is a truth which may stand the test of a colder examination. For the real force of such a contrast lies in this: that

it challenges our theory of life and action with a fresh presentation of some omitted or forgotten facts. It drives us back to the truths from which we should have started, to the one point of departure from which a man can move steadily and consistently through life and death. It meets us first with the old command in its ever new significance—"Know thyself." We were going to throw ourselves without reserve into this or that enthusiasm of beauty, to steep our souls in the excitement of music, or poetry, or art, to forget all else in the engrossing delight of their eager sympathy, to lay aside every hindering thought, to trust the strong desire of our heart, and measure our interests by their intensity: and Christianity recalls us to ourselves. It sets before us, in the compass of a single life, the full expression of that deep and marring discord which has broken up the harmony of this world, and it urges us to seek within ourselves for the secret of the disturbance and misery. It shows us the Perfect Love rejected, Perfect Purity reviled, Perfect Holiness blasphemed, Perfect Mercy scorned; God coming to His own and His own receiving Him not; the righteous Judge condemned; the Lord of Life obedient unto death; and it says that the cause of this anomaly, the condition which made this the earthly Life of the Incarnate Son of God, is to be found within our own

souls: and we know that there is something there which seems at times as though it would crucify the Son of God afresh: something which would distort our choice from the high and spiritual to the bestial and mean: something which has often made us cruel and unjust to other men, and contemptible to ourselves. And as before the Cross which mankind awarded to its Redeemer we feel the havoc and tumult which sin has brought upon the order and truthfulness of our inner life, we must surely hesitate before we say that no restraint shall rest upon our sense of beauty, that there is no need, whatever adversaries may be moving about us, to be sober and vigilant in the world of Art.

But for those who humbly take the yoke upon them, who, as they turn to the manifold wealth of beauty, do not thrust away the knowledge of their own hearts and the thought of Him Whose Death alone has saved them, and Whose strong grace alone sustains and shelters them,—for those the best delights of Art and Nature appear in a new radiance of light and hope, and speak of such things as pass man's understanding. The moments of quickened and exalted life which music and painting stir within them, the controlling splendour of the sunset, the tender glory of the distant hills, the wonder of a pure and noble face,—these no longer come as passing pleasures, flashing out of a dark background,

which is only the gloomier when they are gone, half realized and little understood: for now all are linked and held together as consistent tokens of the same Redeeming, Sanctifying Love; they see the Hand, the pierced Hand, which holds the gift; they know the Love which fashioned and adorned it; they have read elsewhere the thought which is embodied in the outward beauty; for it is He Who spared not His Own Son Who with Him freely gives them all things. And all that He gives them prophesies of Him; and every delicate form, and every pure and burning colour, as it sinks from present sight, foretells the coming of a steadier brightness; till those whose hearts have clung to Him Who had no form nor comeliness, may seem to hear all the majesty and loveliness of Art and Nature bearing their witness with the promise of that other stream of prophecy, "How great is His goodness and how great is His beauty!" "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty": for Thou, O Lord, "art fairer than the children of men; full of grace are Thy lips."

And lastly, when there falls upon this life that inevitable shadow, under whose cold contact every pleasure which has not spoken to us of another world will grow pale, and faint, and death-like—when the keenest thrill of earthly beauty will be powerless by itself to waken one pulse of gladness in the sinking,

struggling heart,—then surely it would be like a ghastly, awful dream if the soul should be wedded beyond the power of severance with thoughts which will not speak to it of anything save the beauty of the world which now it must for ever leave, thoughts which have never been touched with the shadow of the Cross, or waited for the kindling of the love of God : and now engross the desire which they certainly will never again pretend to satisfy,—the desire which should have been kept pure and patient till it might attain to the vision of Him Who in His uncreated beauty created it to rest in Him alone.

VII.

THE LOVE OF BEAUTY :

(3) *IN CHARACTER.*¹

“ I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”—MATT. v. 20.

IN these words our Lord prepares the minds and hearts of His disciples for that great act whose record we read in the remainder of this chapter — the announcement of a new standard of righteousness, a new rule and goal of human effort. He goes on to mark, in regard to five points, the contrast between the new standard and the old : five times He repeats, in that tone of supreme and indisputable authority which belongs to God alone, “Ye have heard that it *was* said ; . . . “but *I* say unto you.” He taketh away the first that He may establish the second. He would bear into His servants’ souls a new conception of good-

¹ A very striking presentation of the evidential significance of our Blessed Lord’s consciousness of sinlessness, as “an anomalous insulation in the self-convicting conscience of humanity,” is given in Dr. Mozley’s essay on “Christ Alone without Sin,” cf. *Lectures and other Theological Papers*, p. 116 *seq.*

ness, a new canon of rectitude in thought, word, and deed: He would remove from them the possibility of self-satisfaction in the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and make them sensitive to a light and hope which hitherto had been beyond their ken. And at the end of this chapter we read His revelation of the very essence of the new Law. Heretofore there had fallen upon earth only the example and shadow of heavenly things: but henceforward men should have boldness to enter into the holiest, and to move among the heavenly things themselves: for the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand: and those who would enter thereinto must judge of right and wrong by reference to no lower rule than this: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father Which is in Heaven is perfect."

Let us look for a while at a thought which seems to be implied in the words of the text, and in that aspect of our Lord's work on earth which bears upon the moral sense of men.

We commonly include in one conception, and often express by one name, two very different acts or powers of our inner life: the one that which defines the moral quality of any thought, word, or deed; the other, that which then orders that this thought, word, or deed should be either pursued or shunned: the former being the act of our moral sense, the latter the proper act of

conscience: the former analogous to the decision of a judge, the latter to the command of a king. It might be said, again, that the moral sense is employed as the augur whom a Roman magistrate might send to watch the heavens for a sign of good or evil omen at the outset of an enterprise: the conscience waits for its report, and according as the augury is of good or evil, lays its charge upon the executive will. The moral sense can only examine, compare, and designate: it is the office of the conscience to command, to prohibit, to enforce. In the ordinary way of thinking and speaking, we lay chief stress upon the voice of conscience: there is a ring of technical phraseology in talking of the moral sense: and while "conscientious" is a common term of praise, there seems a hint of subtlety, a suggestion of something unusual, unnecessary, and possibly inconvenient, when we speak of a man as morally sensitive.—And doubtless for the soul of each man this is the one supremely important question, whether he is living in habitual obedience or disobedience to the commands which his conscience lays on him: for it is the answer to this question which even now is filling those books which shall at the last day be opened before Almighty God: since not the hearers of a law are righteous before Him, but the doers of a law shall be accounted righteous. The voice of conscience

is indeed in each one of us the very earnest of that judgment to come : and the infinite significance of its authority over our life may well withdraw our attention from the other faculties which are astir about its throne. It is, perhaps, from the standpoint of the historian and in the lives of others that we can see more plainly the vast power, and the deep, prophetic meaning of the moral sense, and so more nearly grasp the import of that strange appearance which still is set before us in such words as those of the text, in the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, and in all the glory of our Saviour's Life on earth.

Let us notice, then, that, in the life alike of nations and of individuals, the moral sense appears as a faculty widely variable in range and delicacy. Its canons and verdicts in different centuries and in different places have been almost as diverse and inconsistent as the tastes of men in choosing their pleasures or their dress. It has had in the past its dark ages, and its moments of renaissance : it has risen and fallen in entire severance from many other elements in a nation's life with which we might be tempted to associate it : and generations which have been rich in works of intellect and art have yet found nothing wrong in vices which simpler ages would have loathed. And it may be marked that in this power of development and relapse the moral

sense is again distinguished from the simply imperative conscience. Conscience has indeed a widely varying force in different souls: in some men it seems to be enthroned for a secure and immediate supremacy; in others it is discouraged and despised until its voice may almost die away, like the music of a retreating army: but it is by no means to be thought that its strength is least when the moral sense is lowest. The mere savage, as he sits before his idol and dares not act until he is sure that the mysterious feeling of uneasiness will not visit him, is as truly obedient to conscience as was the wisest of philosophers when he held aloof from the public life of Athens at the bidding of a certain voice which came to him:¹ St. Paul could say that from his forefathers he had served God with a pure conscience, though Saul of Tarsus had thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. No inquiry has yet shaken the truth that the Maker of Heaven and earth, even when He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, still left not Himself without witness: no age or race has yet been found in which the ultimate command of conscience has been other or less certain than it is to-day—that men must refuse the evil, and choose the good. But in regard to the action of the moral sense, in regard

¹ Cf. Plat. *Apologia Socratis*, cap. xix.

to the canons and definition of the evil and the good, we look back over a course of changes and stages as weird and uncouth to our minds as the monsters of the prehistoric world or the grossness of cannibals. And if in this respect we dare to call ourselves the children of the prophets, if we see the moral light which only very few foretold, if the pages of modern history record on the whole a clear growth of this sense in purity and truth, still we must thankfully expect that to the better minds of those who will come after us much that we now tolerate will seem as strange and rude and cruel as we may judge the customs of the middle ages with the torture-chamber and the trial by fire. We find ourselves living at one moment in a line of development whose end no natural reason, apart from the express teaching of the Bible, can foretell. For who can, by scientific forecast, anticipate the morality of the future, or mark where the progress of the moral sense will end? It would be far easier to set a limit to the uses of electricity, the subtleties of civilisation, or the means of gaining and diffusing knowledge.

But secondly, in regard to the life and health of separate souls, we can as plainly trace this continual and boundless variation of the moral sense. There may indeed be some in whose hearts the grace of God has all along fashioned and displayed for every period of

their growth in strength and liberty the appropriate ideal of goodness : who in childhood, boyhood, youth, maturity, have always by His help been pure and happy enough to see and own His perfect Will. But it is surely true that in many, if not in most men the discernment of goodness, the education of the moral sense, is pursued through many stages, by the successive discovery and apprehension of types and patterns more and more nearly good. Let us try to remember, or else to imagine as truthfully as we can, what is the moral life and progress of one who, by God's grace, desires always to do what is right, but to whom, for whatever reason, in himself or in others, the Bible has not yet become the master-light of life and the shrine of all ideals.—The first acts of his conscience in early childhood were guided by a moral sense which simply accepted a few positive rules without question or explanation. There were certain things which he was told to do or not to do : when he did according to this bidding he was good and self-approving : when he disobeyed it he was uneasy, and fearful that he had done wrong. And perhaps there is no more solemn trust in life than that which is thus given to a parent : that he may be for a while as the moral sense to his children's conscience : that he may even stand to them as the representative of the Divine Fatherhood and Authority : that

he is charged with that presentation and rendering of the Will of God which Moses bore when the Almighty said to him, "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh." But this mere acquiescence in the little code of childhood, this happy possibility of blameless self-approval, is presently disturbed by the discovery of regions of choice, of needs for self-determination, and of qualities in other souls, which lie outside the narrow range of single rules. Gradually or suddenly the boy discovers the inadequacy of the child's obedience: he learns, however dimly and unconsciously, that the tests of good and evil must be not merely accepted on another's witness, but drawn from some example or ideal which his own soul can recognize and desire. And in such a case as we are imagining he will most often seek such guidance from the ways and character of some one who seems to him pre-eminently strong, or brilliant, or noble: he will for a while submit his moral sense to the imitation of an elder brother, a school-fellow, or any friend whose life seems near enough to be imitable in his own. And so it may be he acquires a certain conception of right and wrong, a certain set of opinions with regard to his proper interests and aims, a certain sense of what is worthy and unworthy of a man, what is mean and what is admirable, which his conscience may receive as true and adequate for many years of early life. But pre-

sently the higher light breaks in on him again with a merciful and ennobling sense of shame: either the experience of his life may bring him to the overpowering knowledge of that bewildering tumult of lifelong misery which hangs behind our civilisation like the shadow of death: or some anguish of indignity, or dread, or suffering may be fastened upon his own soul, to challenge hour by hour the truth and reality of its thoughts, and to force it further into the deep meaning of great words: or it may be that God brings him into contact again and yet again with some one whose words and ways, whose very look, disturbs him with the implication of a higher standard, of conceptions about life and duty, in contrast with which his own opinions would seem sordid and grotesque: he meets with one to whom he only dares to show his highest thoughts, and fears that even these may jar as discords on a sense of harmony beyond his hearing. Through whatever opening of the heavens, he sees and loves a life above his own: and so he mounts into the purer light and air; he puts away childish things, and goes from strength to strength, while his love abounds yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, as he approves more nearly the things that are excellent in the sight of God. For in truth, as conscience is the steadfast earnest of God's final sentence, so is the moral sense in its growth

and illumination the progressive revelation of His attributes: as conscience steadily declares that hereafter some shall stand upon the right hand of His throne and some upon the left: so by the moral sense we enter into the knowledge of His being, Whose very love is as the touchstone of that severance between the loving and the loveless. And thus, as Lacordaire has said, each discovery in God threatens us with a virtue: and beyond every steep, whither He gives us grace and strength to climb, there rises yet another height, clad in purer whiteness of unsullied snow, and bright with steadier and more perfect light: till at last, it may be from some great and high mountain, we may look even to that great City which hath the glory of God, and her light like unto a stone most precious: and see that it is in that light that the nations of them that are saved shall hereafter walk. And then we know, as we have never known before, not only the poverty of the ideals and canons which hitherto have cramped and detained our moral sense, but also the deep defect, the necessary transience of every form of goodness which man can ever shape and grasp on earth: for the moral restlessness, the urgent displeasure with ourselves which all along has been the impulse of our upward effort, is at length explained and sanctioned and ennobled and sustained by the revelation of its prophetic truth: as

we learn that in reality none is good save One : and that our souls have been athirst for God, yea, even for the living God.

Perhaps in contrast with some such aspects of the moral sense, as it has grown and manifested itself in history and in our own lives, we may more nearly appreciate the evidence with which Christianity appeals to it and claims its witness. I have tried to show, though most imperfectly, how in history it has appeared as variable, and slowly moving forward in a line of development whose future course and goal are uncertain and distant : and how in the separate souls of men it is continually urged onward to a higher standard by successive and ever clearer recognitions of its own defect and childishness. But we have in our hands the record of one Life, one Character, one Form of goodness, which distinctly stands outside this conception of moral progress : which cannot be relegated to any bygone stage in the historical development, and which positively rejects any suspicion of inadequacy or transience. At a certain moment in the past, in the eighth century from the founding of Rome, during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, One lived Whose deeds and words were recorded by four of His adherents : He set forth by His teaching and example, in life and death, a certain rule and ideal for the moral sense : He expressly declared that His words should never pass away, and

that no one could convince Him of sin. In the whole course of His public life He never once changed in the least degree the ground or tenor of His teaching: He retracted nothing, amended nothing, qualified nothing: the simplest people felt that He taught with a strange authority: His enemies owned that no man had ever spoken as He spoke: His friends said that He had the words of eternal life: steadily and royally, without one sign of uncertainty or hesitation or deference or reserve, He declared what should be henceforward the perfect and everlasting canon of goodness: and for the visible rendering of that perfection He pointed men to His own person and example, saying, "I am the light of the world": "I am the way, the truth, and the life":—and then when He was a little past thirty He was crucified as a malefactor.—Eighteen centuries have gone by since then: some of them centuries of swift and brilliant change, some of fearless and outspoken criticism: countless generations have told their newest and boldest thoughts and hopes, and then seen them turned to truisms before they passed away: every custom and conventionality which was prevalent in the Roman empire is buried now under the dust of successive fashions deeper than the material ruins of that vanished glory:—yet still the life of Jesus of Nazareth stands untouched by criticism or by imitation: still He is the unassailed example of all that

pure and noble souls can yearn to be: still the moral sense of every earnest man returns to find in His abiding words the whitest light that ever falls on earth. In those thirty years there came through the shifting clouds and broken gleams of human life a new and steady light, a light which has never faded or faltered or feared eclipse: a light as far above the brightness of this day as it outshone the righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees or the morality of Cicero or Tacitus. Whatever gain of delicacy or of truth, the conscience has received since Jesus lived on earth has been within the compass of His teaching and example: whithersoever any human soul has climbed, still it has only the more humbly fallen down before even the distant vision of His perfect purity. What shall we say, brethren, of Him Who could thus anticipate and transcend the advancing insight and power of nearly a hundred generations?—of Him Whose Image still is enthroned above the breath of all but love and worship? Surely any one who in the story of that Life has simply seen what goodness really is, who has felt the controlling and uplifting power of the Sinless Man and the Love that is stronger than death, may not unreasonably plead with some who wonder that he still believes in the Godhead of His Master: “why, herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence He is: and yet He hath opened mine eyes.”

VIII.

THE PLACE OF THE INTELLECT.¹

“Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.”

ST. MATT. XI. 29.

THERE may seem at first sight to be a great contrast between, on the one hand, the bearing of our Lord and His Apostles towards the human intellect, and, on the other, the place which the intellect has held in the history of the Church. The Son of God at His Incarnation chose for Himself a lot among men utterly removed from the chief intellectual activity of that day: He willed to be born and to live as one of whom men would say that He had had no advantages. For the recipients and channels of His teaching He selected men of very humble rank, with little education and busy lives; men utterly unlikely to attain to high mental power, or make a mark in cultivated society. And just before He spoke the words of the text He had declared His joy and thankfulness that intellectual

¹ Preached in St. Mary's Church at a Service commemorating the foundation of the Pusey House.

eminence had nothing to do with the entrance into His school: that the mysteries of His teaching were hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes. His Apostles maintain the same attitude: and especially St. Paul, himself probably by far the most educated member of the Apostolic body. He seems to exult in the indifference—if we may reverently so speak—of Almighty God to the intellectual qualifications of men: “Ye see your calling, brethren”—he says, almost defiantly, to his converts in the brilliant and critical society of Corinth—“that not many of you are wise, according to the flesh.” “Where is the wise?” he asks; “hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” “He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.”—Such was the bearing and language of the Church as it first confronted the world. It might have seemed as though the triumph of Christianity must necessarily involve, as it has frequently been said to involve, the depreciation of mental power, the discouragement of education, the decay of learning. But in widest contrast with such a thought has been, as you well know, the actual course of the Church’s history. “Christianity,” it has been said with indisputable truth, “has always been a learned religion”: and, to take but one instance of this truth, it is of course to the care of the Church and the

diligence of monasteries that we owe the preservation of all classical learning through the troubles and darkness of many generations. But long before those times the faith of Christ had enlisted, occupied, ennobled, and transcended some of the highest and most splendid intellects that have ever commanded the attention and admiration of any age. The magnificent grasp, the unfaltering insight, the rich and just imagination of St. Athanasius: the pure and burning eloquence of St. Chrysostom: the philosophic depth, the glorious passion, the logical acuteness of St. Augustine: the unrivalled intensity, the pure and classical and clear-cut accuracy of St. Leo: these are but some of the gifts which the Church of the Galilean Carpenter welcomed and ennobled in His servants. And surely we have seen in our own day a fresh and most instructive evidence of the instantaneous readiness with which a revival of the Catholic faith and life at once commands the service and enhances the dignity of minds of the very highest order. Even those who are insensible or indifferent to the real work of the Tractarian movement, those who regard and dislike it as a mere bit of clerical reaction, transient and deplorable: even they must own that its leaders are not likely to be soon forgotten in the intellectual and literary history of this century. Dr. Pusey, Mr. Keble,

Dr. Newman, Dr. Mozley; it would be hard to find outside the Church of Christ, or enlisted in any other cause than His, minds more notable for learning and power and insight than those which they devoted wholly to the faith of the childlike and untaught:—finding there the worthiest exercise and the most surprising development of their extraordinary gifts. And even when we pass into the widest fields of intellectual venture, it seems neither insignificant nor easy of explanation that again and again a great moment of advance in the course of human knowledge has been associated with a revival or increase of purity and intensity in the life of the Church. It would seem as though between the strength of the Church and the growth of the human intellect there were some hidden link, some bond of sympathy, of which neither was fully conscious, and which both at times were tempted to deny, even while it was turning the victories of either to the welfare of both. Certain it is that in the confession of that Faith which from the first has refused to stand in the wisdom of men, and has declared that its highest mysteries are open to the simple and the childlike—in the confession, and often for the cause of that Faith, the mind of man has risen to its noblest strength and beauty, and achieved some of its most memorable conquests, its most steadfast works.

It is on the surface a remarkable contrast between the first preaching of the Gospel and the subsequent splendour of Christian intellect. But below the superficial contrast is a principle of everlasting force—the great principle, I would venture to say, of all that is best in learning and education. Let me try, brethren, however unworthily, to link it with to-day's thanksgiving and commemoration.

I. At the entrance into the Kingdom of God the human intellect is received now exactly as it was in the time of St. Paul. It is greeted with sincere respect and with a lofty and reverent hope; for it is an endowment of a very high order, a great and solemn trust committed by Almighty God to the use of man. Nay, it is even connected by its titles, by its intended place in our nature, by its possible exaltation, with the glory of the Second Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity. But in and by itself, apart from the consideration of its use, it constitutes no claim to enter into the Kingdom: it has no special privileges, no exemptions, no promise of a good place there. If it is to come in, if it is to see the brightness, and to know the joy and peace of those who walk with God, it must come by the one common door, and accept the invariable conditions. It must take upon it the burden of the Cross: it must stoop to the lowliness of the Crucified: it must

count itself but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus its Lord. As Christianity is no respecter of persons in regard to their rank in society, and offers no especial advantages to success in business, so must it refuse to recognise a high position in a class list, or a brilliant reputation in current literature, as of any import at all in the Kingdom of Heaven—unless, indeed, those successes simply mean that the man has humbly and unselfishly tried to do his duty. To cleverness or mental power, for its own sake, Christianity can give no more advantage, no more consideration, than it does to riches, or bodily strength, or social eminence. The intellect, under a false impression that it is slighted or disliked, may retaliate with a taunt of obscurantism, or of reactionary timidity : but the Church has in trust a charge too solemn to be surrendered under any such pressure of misunderstanding or contempt ; by her ministry God hath of His goodness prepared for the poor : for their sakes, for the love of the ignorant, the weary and heavy-laden, the over-driven and the neglected, she can admit no aristocracy and no pre-eminence, save that of holiness : for her Gospel is to be preached unto the poor : and theirs is the Kingdom of which it tells. And so the great, the strong, the rich, and the intellectual, all alike must sue “ *in forma pauperis* ” to God : all must

throw themselves absolutely upon His unearned Love: all must own that of themselves they have nothing which can claim His favour: nothing which can stand in His sight: nothing which does not need His patient forbearance and His merciful forgiveness.

Yes, there is the first, the inevitable demand, at which the intellect hesitates and hangs back at the entrance into the Kingdom of God. For Christianity plainly requires that we should not allow our intellect to shirk or evade the pressure of the Cross: to slip out of our acts of penitence before the all-seeing Judge: to behave as though it were sinless or unfallen, as though it had no need of chastening and watchful self-restraint. No: it too must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ: it must follow the example of His great humility: it must take His yoke upon it. And then—beyond all hope, beyond all thought, beyond all that is natural—it shall learn of Him. Ay, even as by consecration to His service the wealth of this world may be exchanged for treasure in the Heavens, and the princes of this world receive a crown of life; so may the intellect that follows in His steps find that it is indeed steadfastly walking in the way that leads to the fulness of light. “Qui sequitur me, non ambulat in tenebris, dicit Dominus.”¹ He who demands this

¹ *Imitatio Christi*, i. 1.

submission of the intellect will confer upon it even in this life its highest, freest exaltation. It was by no chance in the course of history, no meaningless coincidence, that the Church of the poor, the childlike, the simple-minded, became the great school of learning and philosophy. No: for indeed the Christian character has in it the true secret of intellectual growth. "Christianity seems to have been the first to give to the world the pattern of the true spirit of philosophical investigation": this high claim was the theme of a sermon¹ preached from this pulpit nearly fifty years ago by one of Oxford's very greatest and most brilliant sons: and, brave as the words may sound, they will bear and reward all the investigation that can be given to them. The Cross of Christ, once sincerely accepted by the intellect, will assuredly train it to the greatest strength, the fullest, happiest exercise of which it is capable. Forgive me for recalling a well-known scene, which may be taken as a parable of this great truth. At the time when the Emperor Constantine was hesitating in his profession of Christianity, upon the verge of a critical battle, he was engaged in prayer to God. He prayed, that the Almighty would reveal Himself to him: and that He would stretch forth His

¹ Dr. Newman on "The Philosophical Temper first enjoined by the Gospel," in *Oxford University Sermons*.

right hand to help him against his cruel and idolatrous enemy. And as the sun was declining from the height of noon, a vision was vouchsafed to him. He saw the sign of the Cross in the heavens, standing above the setting sun, arrayed in light: and close to the Cross he read two words—*τούτῳ νίκα*. The next day, it is said, he called together the workers in gold and precious stones, and bade them fashion upon his standard the token of the death of Christ: and with the Cross of shame he led his troops in triumph through the gate of Rome.—So is it, brethren, with the intellect that has taken up that Cross to follow Him Who died thereon: He will lead it in an unfailling path of victory to unending fields of conquest: yes, in all things it shall be more than conqueror through Him: and before its patient and lowly power the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ.—And as the intellect turns away from the lower attractions of brilliant ventures and irresponsible speculations and popular display, it may hear a welcome which will thrill it through and through with a new hope and love: “Hearken, O daughter, and consider; incline thine ear: forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house: so shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty: for He is thy Lord God, and worship thou Him.”

II. “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.”

It would be easy, I think, to discover several ways in which the Christian character, the character imparted and developed by the grace of God, gives men the true temper of learning, and fosters strength and purity of mind. But I would briefly point to three elements in that character, which Dr. Newman has noticed in this regard, and which are, I think, likely to come home to us amidst the associations and memories of this day. For they are traits which were, I believe, among the very highest beauties in that life and work which the Pusey House is designed to commemorate: they are graces which were most potent in that wonderful personal influence which the Pusey House will, so far as possible, sustain; and they had, I venture to think, a great deal to do with the acquisition and exercise of Dr. Pusey's extraordinary and commanding intellectual power.

First of all, then, the Faith of Jesus Christ our Lord presses upon us the resolute cultivation of humility. And about the place and virtue of humility in the philosophic temper the greatest masters of many ages have spoken with one voice. I need not remind you of the recurring profession, the pervading observance of humility in the *Novum Organum*; how he who had "taken all knowledge to be his province" declares and remembers that for entrance into the kingdom of nature, as for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, we must

become as little children. "The education which I advocate," said Professor Faraday, "has for its first and last step—humility."¹ And surely there is nothing which strikes one more when one is brought into contact with a mind of real greatness and of solid strength than the simple humility of speech and bearing which accompany such gifts. I well remember hearing Mr. Darwin say about a writer who was much talked of, and who is apt to be at once very positive and wide-reaching in assertion: "Ah! I never read a page of him without thinking—There's five or six years' work for any one to see whether that's true." Humility and patience: these are the unfailing and characteristic elements in the temper of those who have really most advanced the empire of human knowledge. Surely, then, a man might do worse for whatever intellect he may have than by resolving to train it after His likeness Who took upon Him our flesh, and suffered death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility and patience.

And secondly, Christianity bears a great part in the life and growth of the intellect, by making it serious: by forcing it to be in earnest, and laying upon it the ever-present sense of a most solemn responsibility. "Religion," says Dr. Mozley, "gives the power of

¹ Lectures on Education given at the Royal Institution, London.

receiving education: it provides that seriousness and weight in the mind which knows how to lay hold of the resources to the enjoyment of which it is admitted.”¹ To realize that our search for truth, our inquiry into any subject-matter, is conducted in the sight of God, with faculties which He created and redeemed at an infinite cost, and that our intellectual life will hereafter be brought into judgment before Him: this should lift us at once above the temptation to be light-hearted, or ostentatious, or mercenary, in the use and exercise of the intellect. The pursuit of knowledge will never become desultory or easily satisfied if we understand that the light we seek and the powers we wield come to us from God alone, Who is the Father of lights: and hazy speculations, and ventures of hypothesis, and striking novelties of irresponsible suggestion, will be almost impossible to the mind which seriously and sincerely believes that it is working under the gaze and in the service of the Eternal and Almighty Truth.

And then thirdly, the intellectual life will surely gain in purity and strength if the heart that animates it is unselfish: if its efforts are prompted and ruled by a generous and absorbing and self-sacrificing devotion. We are told that the besetting troubles of education and of learning in our day are “hurry, worry, and

¹ *University Sermons*, p. 301.

money": that often the freedom of the intellect is cramped, its peculiar endowments ignored and repressed, its natural growth distorted, and its dignity and happiness destroyed, by the relentless force of ceaseless and exacting competition. The complaint is, I believe, very true, and of wide application: but if so, what a career is open for minds that are raised by the obedience of Christ and the example of His Cross high above this wasteful strife of tongues: minds that can work in that calmness and sincerity which only come when self has been dethroned, and God, Almighty and All-loving, welcomed to a steadfast sovereignty over a man's life and work. There are especial treasures of knowledge reserved and held back to be the prize of the unselfish and the pure in heart: and as the sanctified intellect, the intellect that has been crucified to the world, that it may escape all the corruption that is in the world through lust: as such an intellect, wearing the likeness, it may be, of its Master's shame, approaches the inner shrine of learning—it may come with a fearless hope and say, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in:" "Thou, O God, wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

III. To be humble, to be in earnest, to be unselfish:—these are the chief obligations which Christianity

imposes on the intellect: these are the conditions of its entrance into the service, the Kingdom of Almighty God:—"quem nosse vivere, cui servire regnare est." And if we want to represent to ourselves a character in which these graces adorn, and illuminate, and sanctify an intellect of the highest order and most massive power, surely our imagination may well remit the task to our memory and affection, and bid us simply think of him whom we commemorate to-day: of Edward Bouverie Pusey. Brethren, throughout this Sermon I have been sincerely condoling with your loss in his enforced absence who was first chosen to speak to you:¹ sincerely wishing that he had been suffered to fulfil his promise and your expectation. He was, through God's grace, united with Dr. Pusey by the most intense and intimate sympathy, the most absorbing and tender friendship, the most loving and appreciative reverence. And therefore, while all along I have, perhaps even as heartily as any one here, deplored his absence from this pulpit, I have never felt it so sadly as now, when I attempt to speak of Dr. Pusey's mind and heart. I can only speak as one admitted by him, with that untired generosity of his, in the last decade of his labours among us, to a friendship which I shall

¹ The Rev. H. P. Liddon, who was hindered by illness from preaching on the occasion of this Sermon.

always treasure with the most sacred memories of my life. But there were characteristic evidences of the inner life which it was impossible to miss, even in the slightest acquaintance with Dr. Pusey. And surely I am right in saying that no graces of his character and work were more immediately remarkable, more irresistibly winning, than his humility, his earnestness, his unselfishness. A humility so habitual that it had indeed become a second nature: so simple and entire that when he had been for some years Professor of Hebrew in this University, where Dr. Newman had long "felt for him an enthusiastic admiration," and used already to call him "*ὁ μέγας*,"¹ a distinguished visitor from Scotland left him, after a long interview, with the approving verdict that he was "a modest lad": a humility to which the subtlest forms of human praise would have been, if he could have understood them, simply nauseous and annoying: this, by the grace of God, was in him. And who can ever forget his earnestness? To it a great and most discerning critic long ago ascribed the unique power of his preaching in this place: for his was "a voice which, without art or manner, or any of the advantages of oratorical discipline or nature, is powerful by intensity, and impressive by the single-minded force of love, and a

¹ Cf. *History of My Religious Opinions*, p. 61.

penetrating purity of will:—a voice which always speaks amid the perfect silence of arrested and subdued thoughts: and which imparts to its hearers, for the time, somewhat of that serenity, awe, and singleness, out of which itself issues.”¹ And surely if ever any one, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was led utterly outside the shadow of himself—if ever any one had learned to refer every action, every desire, simply and immediately to the Divine Will, and to live wholly and purely for one service, Dr. Pusey had been so led, so taught of God. It is the privilege of genius to give a fresh meaning to familiar truths: it is the privilege of saintliness to surprise us with a fresh illustration of primary graces: and Dr. Pusey has certainly enriched the life of Oxford and of England, and brightened the history of scholarship, with a rare and honourable example of unselfishness, and earnestness, and humility.

IV. When the highest gifts of intellect are consecrated by union with these graces, the result is a power of personal influence which it would be difficult to limit. Wherever a man meets with that combination of gentleness and strength which is, indeed, the reflection in human character of the Fatherhood of God, there he is ready at once to place his trust, and to open his heart. And in a place and time where

¹ Dr. Mozley's *Essay on Dr. Pusey's Sermon*, in 1846.

hearts are restless and minds perplexed, there is an incalculable work of consolation, and of guidance, and of encouragement, which calls, with piteous necessity, for gifts and graces such as were vouchsafed in a pre-eminent degree to Dr. Pusey. For more than fifty years he was God's messenger of peace and light to unnumbered souls: it can never be known in this world how many were rescued from distress and doubt, defended from despair, stayed on the verge of reckless unbelief and soul-destroying sin by his unwearied, ever-gentle, ever-prayerful work of love and wisdom. Amidst the prevalent discouragement of faith, amidst the spiritual sterility of much that passes for religious teaching, amidst the subtle encroachment of dangerous forms of art, it is not likely that the need for such help as was ever found with him will grow less in Oxford than it was while he was with us. And the House which bears the honour of his name may do a work of widest and highest beneficence for England if, in the mental bewilderment and the moral perils of Oxford, her sons shall find there in years to come—as indeed, by God's mercy, they are already finding—the continuance of that unfailing, steadfast, calm, and fearless help which ever rests in the ministry of grace and in the fulness of the Catholic Faith.

But we have yet a further hope enshrined in the

Pusey House: a hope for whose rich earnest, wonderfully vouchsafed to us already, we would praise and thank Almighty God to-day. The establishment and constitution of the House are, I think, a venture of faith in the power and prerogative of the sanctified intellect. We believe that intellectual powers, trained in the daily imitation of their Crucified Redeemer, held in resolute allegiance to His honour, illumined by His worship, guided by His revelation, and enabled and informed by the grace of His Sacraments, will achieve, in the work of literature and learning, results of abiding value and of commanding importance. We can point, for the support of this belief, to its frequent illustration in the history of the Church: but its truth comes nearest home to us to-day in the European reputation of Dr. Pusey's theology and scholarship. With humble, yet most eager and aspiring hope, we lift our thanks to God that the first Librarians of the Pusey House have already begun to justify this venture of faith, and to show how, under the yoke of Christ, the intellect may move with a better grace and surer strength than it is apt to show in its less disciplined exercises. Yes, we are not afraid to hope and to pray that the work which we now commemorate may be, in God's providence, the beginning of a new growth, a new power in the English Church:—that it may be at

least one step towards the restoration of our Theology to its rightful throne: and that the inexhaustible Truth of God may disclose yet new vigour and energy, new depths of light, new heights of glory, and new wealth of love for those who seek it, "not as the function of their own activities, the triumph of their own penetration, or the offspring of their own mind":¹ but as the ever-living Majesty of the Uncreated Son of God: even as His own Being Who created and redeemed us, Who sustains us by His providence, and sanctifies us by His presence: Who being in the beginning was in time made man: Who, "remaining in Himself, maketh all things new: and in all ages entereth into holy souls and maketh them friends of God."

¹ Dr. Mozley's Essay on Blanco White.

IX.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN.

“What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? . . .

“Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; and Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.”

PSALM VIII. 4-6.

OF the many ways in which the Bible may be studied, the most difficult, and perhaps among educated people not the most common, is that in which undoubtedly it has most to teach us. For the great purpose of the Bible, its supreme task in our lives is the illumination of conscience and the development and education of the spiritual life. And there is surely a striking contrast between the amount and quality of thought devoted, with the utmost keenness and intensity, to the subordinate aspects, the accessory details of its various parts, and the forgetfulness or transient regard with which this, its one great purpose, its inmost character, supreme and central, seems to be very often slighted. The Bible claims to be God's answer to that instinctive cry of every thoughtful heart in the per-

plexity and uncertainty of this fragmentary life—"O send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me"—it is offered to us, and commended by centuries of experience, as that Word of God, spoken of with dim hope in the *Phaedo*, which will carry a man through life more safely and surely than the best of human opinions. It comes to us as a distinct and certain voice amidst

"Those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings ;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized" :

it would speak with us heart to heart: it would teach us to know ourselves, and the real meaning of our lives: it would set our feet upon the Rock of the Eternal and Unchanging Truth: it would order our goings in the way of peace. And we—is it not an experience of the inner life as well as a characteristic note of current literature?—we are constantly losing sight of this, the dominant and essential aspect of the Bible: our minds falter away from direct and steadfast concentration upon the fount of moral light, the shrine of that voice which would speak to us with such piercing knowledge of our hearts: the effort of attention flags, and we stray off with childlike weariness to the side issues, the adjacent fields of interest, where both

investigation and its results will make less demand upon us. It is so much easier, it has been truly said, to read a Commentary than to read the Bible : yes—just as it is much easier to know about God than to know God Himself. And so we are always swerving from the direct appeal of Scripture, wandering from the one real point : we change the conversation, as it were, when it begins to be too exacting : and we go off into all sorts of collateral questions about scholarship, or geology, or antiquarian research : studies in themselves of course most honourable and important, most worthy in the sight of God : only not reaching to that inner depth where His saints in every age have found the secret strength of the Bible : where alone the final, clenching proof of its divineness can be recognized and felt. It is often a pathetic failure that results : it is as though Wisdom were crying upon the high places of the city, “ Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled ” : and those whom she addressed were persistently engaged in examining the architecture of her house, or discussing the language of her invitation. It is the old contrast : “ God’s Word is tried to the uttermost ” : tried by every standard, in every field of criticism : but His “ servant loveth it ” : His servant, who simply seeks and finds in it the light he needs in this puzzling, transient world, the hope he craves in the

eternal world to come: and who believes that by the standard of that Word he shall be judged in the Last Day.

But if this disproportionate division of interest is seen in regard to any part of the Bible, surely it is pre-eminently seen in regard to its first chapter.¹ We read the Creation-Proem of Genesis, as it has been lately called, with our minds full of the ideas, the conceptions which belong to our own day: we expect it to impart to us knowledge on the same plane with that which we gather from the last book that we have read: and while, of course, we do not gain this, we also miss those ever-new and everlasting truths which were indeed among the first gifts of God for the direction of human life. Many men now turn away—let us frankly own it—with a sense of weariness which has become almost proverbial from the unwearied efforts to establish a scientific harmony between Genesis and Geology. However the debate may end, it is felt that it is diverting attention from the centre to the circumference, from the dominant motive to the details, from the real test of a Divine revelation to that which men might safely be content to leave for a while unsettled. And it would be well indeed if, as we lay down our Review, with the thought, perhaps, that no-

¹ Appointed as the First Lesson in the Morning Service of the day on which this Sermon was preached.

thing better can easily be done on those lines, and that it has added the most brilliant chapter to a somewhat unprogressive story, we would resolutely fasten upon those points in the Divine teaching which have least to do with geology and most to do with life: those points for the sake of which, if it may be reverently said, the whole mysterious scene might seem to have been urged by the Will of God upon the conscience and the heart of man. For if we could even imagine an authoritative and distinct revelation of a complete scientific system, surely it might seem that it would have brought to human life more loss than gain; for men have had far more happiness and benefit in patiently discovering the truths of nature for themselves than they could have had in receiving them all ready and precise without effort or inquiry. But there are truths in this great vision of the beginning which humanity could not afford to wait for or dispense with: truths which are a necessary part of man's outfit for his life, though he might never have discovered them for himself: truths which bear directly on the use, the duties, the temptations of every day we live: truths to which the most ingenious achievements of our minds are but as the moss and heather—or, it may be, only as the shadows of the floating clouds—upon the slopes of the everlasting hills. Valuable and admirable as all true knowledge is—*οὐχ*

ὡς ἀτιμάζων λέγω τὴν τοιαύτην ἐπιστήμην—still, as he knew into whose mouth these words are put,¹ men could get on in happiness and virtue without an accurate system of geology: they could be left to wait, through the successive corrections of scientific error, the slow approximations to scientific truth: but they could not have got on at all without a true conception of their place and calling in this world, of their relations and their duties towards the creation and the Creator: and to give them this—this ground and condition of the spiritual life—Almighty God was pleased to disclose in part that mystery which was in the beginning, and the rhythm of His unimaginable work.

“What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?” Plainly that question touches the very springs of action: and some answer to it is implied in every conscious choice we make, in every conception which we form of life and duty. I was told the other day of one who had said that men might get on very well if it were not for a fungus, a parasitic growth, which had fastened upon their organism, and was fatal to their health and comfort: and that parasitic growth proved to be the life of the intellect. It is hard to imagine definitely a scheme of conduct arranged according to that view of our

¹ Socrates, in the *Apologia* of Plato, ch. iii.

faculties : but logically, of course, it would aim at the nearest possible approximation to those creatures

“ Who nourish a blind life within the brain.”

It is worth noticing, as the extreme antithesis to the belief which sustains all nobility of purpose, and all upward effort—the belief which from the outset, with unhesitating distinctness and uplifting energy, the Bible has borne into the hearts of men. “ God made man to have dominion over the works of His hands : God hath put all things under his feet.” That answer, with which the Psalmist seems to reassure himself as his soul sinks down in its conscious weakness under the silent majesty of the visible heavens—that answer had been given long before in the Book of Genesis: “ God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness ; and let them have dominion over all the earth, . . . over every living thing that moveth on the earth.’ ” It is the last of the great series of pictures in which the truth of that inconceivable beginning is brought home to us. It is the last act towards which all the successive stages of creative energy have been moving forward, and in which they find at length their explanation and their purpose. All the great fabric of this world : the obedient stream of light, scattering the darkness from the face of the deep : the gathering together of the waters, and the emerging of dry land : all the bounty and delicacy of

visible beauty, the clothing of hills and plains, the glory of the forest, and the grace of flowers: the splendour of the heavens by night and day: the multitudinous life of sea, and air, and earth: all the variety, and majesty, and strength, and wonder of the world, with all the mystery of living things: all this, that surpasses understanding or imagination, is at last achieved, no matter now through what processes of creation, or courses of elaboration, or incalculable tracts of time: all stands, but only ready and expectant: all is as an empty stage, a silent orchestra, a vacant throne, until one more creative word goes forth: and above all that world of life and beauty, as its lord, its voice, comes *man*, made in the image of God. All else has been tending only towards him: all would have been abortive, meaningless, save for him: he is to rule, to speak for all, as the crown and completion of the work. He may find himself surpassed in every power of physical life by the beasts that perish: he may be dwarfed into utter insignificance by the grandeur that is around him: but all things are for his sake, and he is greater far than all,—greater by the impress of God's Own image, and by the gifts that may make him the friend of his Creator: greater by this—that he, and he alone, has the mind that can know God, the heart that can love God, the will that can choose God. And greater still, unutterably greater, for that in the fulness

of time his nature shall be worn by God Himself: that the Eternal Son, the Maker of all things, shall wrap a robe of manhood round His uncreated glory and, being made man, shall retrace in everlasting beauty the true lines of that image and likeness which sin will then have soiled and blurred from its first perfection and the fulness of its grace.

Such is the conception of man's place in this world with which the Bible begins to teach him how to live—and how to die. "Man," it has been well said, "is the central figure there, or, to speak more truly, the only figure; all which is there besides serves but as a background for him."¹ He may often seem the jest of the world, the victim of circumstances: but he has that which lifts him above all else on earth, as the crown and glory of created things—the viceroy of the Almighty over the works of His hands. Distinctly and steadily, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, that belief about himself and his vocation was pressed upon him: it was the underlying assumption of his spiritual and moral training: and still it ever calls to us to come up higher. Surely they are more than human words that speak to us out of that dim distance of antiquity, and point us to a level of life, a purity of self-realization, from which we know that we, with all

¹ Trench, *Hulsean Lectures*, p. 25.

our advantages, all our experiences, all our prayers, falter day after day. But it seems yet more impressive when we remember through what difficulties and discouragements that belief in the prerogative of manhood must have been upheld under the conditions of those far ruder ages. Imagine the helplessness, the frail, uncertain tenure of life; the dim and brief foresight of men in those earliest stages of their history: think how the great forces of Nature would rush upon the unwarned, unsheltered tribes, with an irresistible devastation: how puny and pitiable the little attempts at self-defence would seem: imagine the dreary and unheeded disadvantage with which man would be the prey of the beasts of the field: the miserable feebleness and pettiness of his whole lot in contrast with the might and majesty of the world around him. Or think again how all individuality, all sense of separate identity, all thought of a separate and inherent supremacy, seems lost in the vast hordes of men as we see them in their primitive migrations, drifting—it has been wonderfully said—like huge clouds across the scene of time:¹ we watch those masses and aggregates of human life swept on from east to west, just as from Shotover or Foxcombe you may see the great, sullen storm rolling away before the blustering wind: and it

¹ R. W. Church, *The Discipline of the Christian Character*, p. 12.

is hard indeed to realize that every unit in that shifting multitude was — and is — his own centre: that every soul in that unnumbered herd bore indeed the image and the likeness of God: that every one was invested with a royalty which lifted him above all the greatness of this world; a dignity and a calling which made him—even as, perhaps, he sank down to die in the desert, watched only, as it seemed, by the vultures hovering above him—more precious, more glorious to the Mind of God than all the wealth and beauty that has ever been lavished in His service. Yes—it was no light triumph of the truth to insist, with fearless and unflinching certainty, through scenes like these, that God made man to have dominion over all the earth: to bear into men's hearts with ever-deepening conviction and more effective clearness the surpassing honour of their manhood: and to make them feel that if they were but poorly furnished with the lower faculties of life, if the brutes were better far than they in strength, and speed, and sight, and hearing, it was, as Hooker says, because “the endeavours of Nature, when it hath a higher perfection to seek, are in lower the more remiss”:¹ because the mind that made them men was bent upon fashioning the inner life to a freedom and a glory which no other creature upon earth could ever covet or suspect.

¹ *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, I. vi. 2.

Each age besets with its own characteristic perils the great truths which quicken and advance the spiritual life. In the changes and chances of this world, as the pendulum of fashion or of feeling swings now to this side, now to that, new temptations make it hard to keep in the narrow way, new tendencies to error or exaggeration demand fresh efforts of watchfulness and prayer. A pure and living faith comes easily to no generation: and perhaps it was just as hard for the Israelite, as he toiled at Pharaoh's treasure cities, or sat down by the waters of Babylon, to see and order his life according to the truth of God, as it can be for any of us amidst the difficulties of our day. The struggle is exactly the same: only we fight upon another field. And so this truth, that a man is nobler and greater than all else in this world—that he has a calling which lifts him above all created things, is endangered now by other risks than those which made it hard to hold in earlier ages.

The patience and ingenuity of many generations have given us a wide mastery over the forces of Nature within the security of a settled life: but in the vast complexity of an advanced civilization, in the haste and crowding of great cities, in the huge, noisy mechanism of society, it may, perhaps, be quite as hard as ever to realize in thought and deed those awful and inspir-

ing truths about ourselves which the first words of revelation calmly, plainly, press upon us. And even if for ourselves in some dim, inadequate way we can appropriate them: if we sometimes manage to drag our minds up to the realization that there is indeed in us a capacity, a power that rises far above all the loss and gain of this world; still how constantly we forget that it is even so with every man and woman and child in all the throng and multitude of life around us. We lose the truth in a crowd: we bury it in statistics: we cannot be troubled with it when we are in a hurry. These are ways in which the whole character of modern life obscures the honour of humanity. But it is also infringed by yet another, and a more subtle peril, which seems to be especially characteristic of our generation. It is hard to describe it without a risk of injustice and a probability of misunderstanding: but I am sure that it is a real and serious danger: and I would ask you to bear with me while I try to point to it, leaving to you the more exact definition of its limits.—When men speak of pursuing Art simply for Art's sake: when the quest and enjoyment of visible beauty is thought to be the highest use of a man's time: when we are told that we must be content if a picture shows us graceful forms and colours that delight and satisfy the eye, and that we are importing

alien ideas into the sphere of art in asking for anything more—for any spiritual motive or effect:—when it is claimed that the voice of conscience and the ordinary moral laws have nothing to do with the artist's work:—when in any way, for a single moment, we are invited or inclined to disregard the welfare of a human soul, its growth in purity and holiness,—be it our own soul or our brother's,—for the sake of art:—or even when we think that indolence or loitering or uselessness or extravagance are justified in the service of a cultivated taste:—when in any such way we suffer even the noblest pleasures and ministries of life to vie with the end towards which it should be their chief privilege to help us:—then are we not trifling with the truth which bids us lift our lives out of all imprisonment in the things of sense; the truth which tells us of a destiny it is treason to subordinate to any other thought or aim: which teaches us that all else in this world must be tributary to man, and appraised only as it helps him to be that wonder and glory of God's Love which by God's Grace he may be? “The opposite of humanity,” says Dr. Martensen, “is barbarism:”—and, he adds, “this is precisely the nature of barbarism—to estimate the humanity of the individual according to his talents and his deeds, instead of according to his

conscience and his will.”¹ And so, too, a great writer of our own country: “It is not the work which each man does—student, teacher, engineer, man of business, artist—which makes the difference between man and man; it is not the work, but the consecration of the work.” “The measure and standard of everything in man’s life and actions is that goodness by which, at however great a distance, he approaches the moral nature of his God and Father in Heaven.”² Deliberately to subordinate one human soul to the purposes of art: to detain it, as it were, for our own pleasure, for the adornment of life, from its Divine calling and its course towards God: here is the peril, surely, of some forms of culture, or sometimes, it must be allowed, of affectation, in our day. A very brilliant writer, of whose great work all society was talking some few years ago, published afterwards a short story which he called a spiritual romance. It was, perhaps, overshadowed by the recollection of *John Inglesant*, and it hardly commanded the attention it deserved. But there were thoughts in that tragedy of the Schoolmaster Mark, which might, I think, help and encourage many men to hold a right course through all the subtle perplexities, the moral bewilderment, the tangled growth

¹ Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 138, 140.

² R. W. Church, *Human Life and its Conditions*, p. 8.

of vile and noble, which belong to modern art. And among the solemn and penetrating suggestions of the book, there came out with clear, arresting emphasis the doom of selfish art: the certain degradation of a soul that dares to use the faith, the sorrows, the lives of others as means to a heightened æsthetic gratification for itself: the catastrophe with which death and lust crash in on one who, bent only upon elaborating the abundance of life's feast, ignores the true honour of humanity and the supremacy of goodness. The inevitable disasters of a life so planned, the sure Nemesis of facts ignored, and light shut out, and faculties unused, are shown us there with all the delicate power of a most beautiful mind. But out of the heart of the sixteenth century, out of the full splendour of the Renaissance, comes a cry which tells more solemnly than almost any words I know, how the simple truth of what manhood means may come home to one as the best of life is slipping from one's grasp, even though the treasures of art may have been realised in their very utmost wealth. Many of you know the lines—the sonnet written by Michael Angelo to Vasari in 1554;—but suffer me to quote them:—

“ Now hath my life across a stormy sea
Like a frail bark reached that wide port where all
Are bidden, ere the final reckoning fall
Of good and evil for eternity.

Now know I well how that fond phantasy
 Which made my soul the worshipper and thrall
 Of earthly art, is vain ; how criminal
 Is that which all men seek unwillingly.
 Those amorous thoughts which were so lightly dressed,
 What are they when the double death is nigh ?
 The one I know for sure, the other dread.
 Painting nor sculpture now can lull to rest
 My soul that turns to His great love on high,
 Whose Arms to clasp us on the Cross were spread.”¹

Hardly could any teacher with higher authority or with nobler words point us to the true worth of life, the true work and calling of men made in the Image of God, redeemed by the Sacrifice of the Eternal Son, sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost :—but there are words, we know, which come to us with a yet more solemn and controlling sanction :—words such as these :—“ What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? ” “ All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof : but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

¹ *The Sonnets of Michael Angelo and Campanella*, translated by J. A. Symonds, p. 102.

X.

READINESS.

“The preparation of the gospel of peace.—EPH. VI. 15.

I DO not think we can be wrong in taking these words to mean the preparedness, the readiness, which belongs to, which comes of, which is engendered and fostered by, the gospel of peace. St. Paul is speaking of the several parts of the armour of God:—the equipment which He offers us that we may be able to withstand and conquer the enemies of our spiritual life: he is sketching for us a picture of the soldier of Christ, fully armed for the good fight. And, that we may stand firmly, that we may step forward freely and quickly and safely, he would have us shod with a divine readiness, the readiness that is to be learned under the discipline of Christ and of His Gospel. Thus readiness, the habitual temper of being prepared, of being alert, is placed here on a level even with truth and righteousness and faith: it is set forth as a primary grace in the Christian character, an essential means of strength and security in the Christian life.

We shall make but a poor affair of it, whatever other powers we may have, unless we have gained and held this grace of readiness.

And perhaps even a little experience of life, a little knowledge of ourselves and our circumstances, may enable us to understand why St. Paul thinks so much of readiness, and places it so high: why we ought all to be gaining more and more of it, learning to be more alert and sensitive to spiritual things. Let me try to speak of two ways in which this seems to be of great and ever growing importance: two thoughts which seem to show how much we may lose if we do not train ourselves to be ready to know and do God's Will.

And first of this:—that the opportunities of life often come to men so quietly and pass away so swiftly: it is so easy to miss them irrevocably if we are not ready and watchful. Hardly any of us can know at all for what we are being trained and fashioned through the earlier and perhaps the middle years of life: what is the trust, the service, the venture, the sacrifice for which God is trying to prepare us. I suppose St. John Baptist, as the days went by in the wilderness, had only a very vague idea what part he would have to play in the history of the world: but when the few months of opportunity came after the many years of training he was ready, and he saw his place, and heard

his call, and won his crown. And so is it, in some degree, with us all. All the gifts, the privileges, the joys and sorrows, the intenser moments of our life are leading up to something, shaping us to be fit for some especial work :—we may be quite sure of that :—we may dimly feel it sometimes :—but what the work is we cannot yet tell. To all it might be said : “What I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter.” In due time God will lead us up to the great opportunity of our life : the chance of making our venture for His sake and in His strength : the chance of mounting up on to a higher level. It may come to us in many forms : in the needs of others : in the summons to self-sacrifice : in the bidding to break with friends or comfort or popularity for His Name’s sake ; or in the call to any state of life which has higher possibilities both of blessing and of suffering than those of the safer level where we are. The opportunities of life have many aspects : but they are real, and rare, and critical, and transient : and they are often missed. For, our Lord says, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Who can tell, brethren, what issues may depend, for ourselves, and for many others, it may be, on our recognising the opportunity when it comes—on our readiness to greet it—on our knowing what He would have us to do ? For this one choice, this one venture, He may

have given us every blessing of our life :—the chastening we could not understand may have been for this : all the years that are past may have been like our school days of preparation to do this :—and then, after all, to blunder about it—to miss it—to refuse it !

“ How the world is made for each of us !
 How all we perceive and know in it
 Tends to some moment's product thus,
 When a soul declares itself—to wit
 By its fruit, the thing it does ! ”¹

Yes—a human life is often like a common soldier's experience in some great historic battle. Hour after hour he waits and wonders, with very little to do, as it seems : simply staying where he was told to stay : knowing very little of what is going on : and all seems safe, and rather tedious. But then—as the sun declines towards evening it may be—the order comes to his battalion : and in the next ten minutes, perhaps, he has borne his part in the disaster or the triumph of the day. Quietly and quickly, and obscurely it may be, the opportunity of our life, the venture that is marked with our name, for us to make it, will come before us. And then we may be unready : we may ignore it in our dulness : we may misunderstand it in our wilfulness : we may refuse it in our timidity : and if we do,

¹ R. Browning, “ By the Fireside,” in *Poetical Works*, vol. iii. p. 181.

probably it will never come again. We may be safer, very likely, where we are: the venture would have been irrevocable. Yes, and so is the refusal: we can never be quite what we should have been if only we had been ready when the moment came. For through all life, and through every crisis of life, the parable of the five wise and the five foolish holds its truth: "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

The second clear reason why the habit of readiness should seem so necessary in the Christian character is this: that sin is so subtle and treacherous and cruel: and so swift in the havoc that it works. The most disastrous temptations of our life are not those which come upon us all at once, with violent abruptness of assault: but rather those which wait, until our powers of resistance have been enfeebled by little acts of disloyalty, and little ways of self-indulgence, until our clearness of sight has been disturbed and dimmed by some habitual trifling with conscience, some repeated insincerity or self-deception, half-conscious at the least. And then the critical temptation comes:—suddenly, it may be, with the necessity for prompt decision: and the decisive act may seem to the eyes of other men of no great importance:—but for

us it is a turning-point in our life : and probably in some vague way, by some obstinate protest in the background of our mind, we know that it is so. And all may turn upon our being ready. Those critical, significant, self-revealing, irrevocable acts : so slight in their outward look—so vast and strong in their influence on life :—we can read their record everywhere—in the Bible—in history :—in fiction :—in the lives around us :—they are the appalling disasters of unreadiness. But there is one scene in a great novel of our day which often comes back to me with thoughts like these. It is the scene in *Romola* where Tito Melema, the graceful, sensitive, refined, and pleasure-loving Greek, turns, as some one stumbles behind him and clutches at his arm on the steps of the Cathedral at Florence ; turns, and sees a squalid old man, with a hard fierce face ; and recognises his foster-father, whose trust, in shameless selfishness, he has betrayed :—recognises him, and, with the decisive lie of all his life, denies him. “Who is he, I wonder,” asks his friend Lorenzo :—“Some madman, surely,” said Tito. “He hardly knew,” it is added, “how the words had come to his lips ; there are moments when our passions speak and decide for us, and we seem to stand by and wonder.” “The words had leaped forth like a sudden birth that had been begotten and nourished in the darkness.”

Surely it is terrible to think how pregnant—how full of consequence—some moments are:—to think that each day may bring such a moment upon us and summon us to such a choice: to think how unready we may be. It puts new meaning—new eagerness into the prayer that our Lord has taught us—the prayer of children who know their danger and their dependence: “Our Father, which art in heaven—lead us not into temptation: but deliver us from evil.” And it calls us too to strive and pray and train our hearts and minds for this most necessary grace of readiness. To keep our passions and our temper under control: to have no wilfulness in judgment: to allow ourselves in no known insincerity: to encourage conscience to speak frankly and firmly to us: to make no excuses for moral cowardice: to cherish truth in the inward parts:—these are some of the ways which seem to make men clear and ready in the time of trial. But above all readiness is that of which the text speaks: the readiness of the gospel of peace. The readiness that comes with the conviction that our sins are all forgiven for Christ’s sake: the clearness and keenness of the cleansed soul. It is in the school of Christ, by the light of His example and by the power of His grace, that men have learnt, that men may learn that readiness, that calmness of the watchful and collected mind

that is never terrified and never betrayed. We shall not miss the opportunities of life if when they come to us we are pure in heart :—we shall not be afraid of the venture if we feel that it will bring us anyhow nearer to Him Who gave His life for us :—we shall not be misled by the deceitfulness of sin if day by day we live as in God's Presence, as fighting ever under His eye. And we shall not, surely, hesitate or break down over the sacrifices, whatever they may be, which His service may demand of us, if beyond the few years of this life we see Him waiting for us, to welcome us into that rest and light which His Presence is.

PART II.

I.

THE NEED OF HEALING.

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.”
ROMANS v. 12.

“THE traits of greatness and of misery in man are so clear,” says Pascal, “that it is absolutely necessary that the true religion should teach us that there is in him some great principle of greatness and at the same time some great principle of misery.”¹ There are—that is to say—two sharply contrasted groups of facts in human life: and these must be recognised and accounted for, and traced to their origin in any system of teaching which claims to tell us the truth about ourselves. They are fully recognised in the Christian Scriptures: and as we draw near to Lent, with its call to be still and know ourselves and God, the Church sets before us in the first lessons for these Sundays² its faith, its story concerning the strange contrast which we see within and

¹ *Pensées*, Part ii. Art. v.

² Septuagesima and Sexagesima, on the latter of which days this Sermon was preached before the University of Cambridge.

all around us. On Septuagesima Sunday we learnt the secret of those attributes of royalty, those instincts of a supreme vocation, those "immortal longings" in us, which no failure or degradation or despondency can utterly destroy, and no earthly gratification long appease:—they are the relics and inklings of our first estate—of God's own thought of us: they have lingered on in man because he was made in the image and likeness of God, and bidden to have dominion over all the works of His hands. To-day the light falls upon the other side of the contrast. In the third Chapter of Genesis, in the story whose tremendous issue is told in the words of the text, we see the beginning of all that dreary, mean, disfiguring misery that cuts across and rudely clashes with the honour of humanity, its high thoughts and aims: as the heir of a great house, entering upon his envied heritage, is saddened for life as he is told the secret of some shameful cloud, some haunting doom which besets the name he boasts, some taint of dishonour or wretchedness that is in his veins:—so we learn the great blot on our scutcheon, the enfeebling shame and sickness that is transmitted to us with our manhood: how it is that we can be so noble, and so base, so exalted and so pitiable, so aspiring and so grovelling:—it is because "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

I would use the privilege granted to me here, to-day, and if it please God, on Sunday next, just to touch some thoughts concerning this astounding revelation : in the hope that by God's grace, it may come to have in our lives somewhat more of the influence for which He designed it.

And first let us try to see how naturally and reasonably faith may link the mysterious record of the Fall with the plain facts of our present state.

There is a clear and familiar analogy between the childhood of each one of us and the childhood of our race : and expressions are often and easily transferred from the one to the other. And surely in one regard the analogy is very striking and instructive : namely, in the likeness of the means by which in both cases we come to know the changes, troubles, blessings, trials, through which we passed in those earliest days of growth. We may try to look back to our own infancy :— we may try to look back to the beginning of mankind :— and, in both cases, the utmost effort of our thought flags and fails long before it touches or draws near to the first dawn of life and consciousness : in both cases there is much that we must take on trust, here relying upon the words of earthly parents, there upon the Word of our Father Which is in Heaven. And furthermore, we then come to find, in both cases, that life itself is a continual and progressive verification of that which we

have thus received by faith. For as we try to recall by the effort of memory the first years of our own lives, the lines which we can retrace perhaps through our school-days grow faint and uncertain as they enter the further past: then they are broken, sometimes wholly lost, sometimes dimly emerging: till in the far distance of childhood only a few points of quivering light appear, like the scattered lamps of a straggling suburb: and long, perhaps, before we reach the scene of our first fault, the tracks of consciousness are utterly lost in impenetrable haze. It is from others that we learn the story of those earliest days: we trust others for all knowledge of the time of our birth, and the first shelter of our life: others tell us to whom we owed the care and love in which self-knowledge woke: we must ask others how our place and lot were first marked out for us among our fellow-men.¹ It is faith in others, the evidence of things not seen, which links our present and our past: which gives us the bare outline of our infancy, and shows us our own life, continuous beyond the utmost range of memory. But then, as we go on living by this faith, accepting the privileges, the duties, the manifold conditions of the state assigned to us, the witness of experience day by day confirms our trust: we find within ourselves and all around us the signs, the sequels, the outcome of our forgotten past: we are

¹ Cf. *S. Aug. de Videndo Deo Liber ad Paulinam* (Ep. clxvii.), § 5. (Ed. Benedict. ii. 475.)

ourselves such as we were forewarned that we should be: all our circumstances agree with the story of our vanished infancy, our inscrutable beginning: until at last we almost seem to know for ourselves that which our own lives so steadily verify for us.

Now, is it not even exactly thus, brethren, with the dim childhood of mankind? We travel back along the centuries towards the beginning of our race:—presently the guidance of history falters and then stops:—then tradition fails us, long before we get to the boyhood of humanity—at last even Science is irresolute, and only offers us assumptions or hypotheses as to the outward circumstances of that hidden infancy, whose inner life seems veiled for ever from all efforts of investigation. Our thoughts, our conjectures, halt in a silence and darkness as of midnight. Natural reason tells us as little of the childhood of humanity, as memory can tell us of our own. But then—from behind the veil—out of that Light unapproachable which the darkness hides, there comes a Voice—the Voice of the Father of Spirits—the Voice of Him Whose eyes did see our substance yet being imperfect: and He it is, and He alone, Who tells us how man first became a living soul, and what were the conditions of his dawning thought: from Him we learn how our new life was lifted up by the inward strength of His own holiness, by the unchecked fulness

of His grace: He teaches us what was the trial of those early years, and what choice first called our freedom into exercise. And then He shows us the beginning of our sin, and all its sudden, devastating work: how it cast us down from Him, and how the inward glory went from us, and the royal will was marred: and what it was that gave to motherhood its pangs, to work its weariness, to life its sorrows, and to death its sting. All that wondrous vision of man's infancy He offers to our faith. He bids us trust Him here.—But here again Faith is not left to stand alone. All the experience of living—the tragedies of history and of each several soul—they retrace the self-same outline: they repeat the story of those mysterious days. Yes—we do find ourselves to be just what that strange revelation would lead us to expect: confused, faltering, half-hearted, restless: uncertain of our proper place: bewildered, as one has said, between our ideal and our caricature: contented neither with virtue nor with vice: incapable alike of absolute ignorance and of certain knowledge: twisted, somehow, from the directness and simplicity which nevertheless we feel to be the true purport of our nature: we have forces striving in us which are and are not ourselves, we have desires from which we recoil, and aversions for which we long: so that sometimes it almost seems as though man might have called himself fallen, even if God had never told

him how he fell. We look back with a deepening recognition to those first strange scenes: life appears as the progressive verification of our faith: and by signs ever clearer and more numerous, in ourselves and in the world around, we come to discern a story of our own childhood in the record of the Fall. They seem no longer puzzling or unreal words that tell how by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: for we see creation in the bondage of corruption: and it is the cry of our own heart's distress—"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Yes, brethren, it is true indeed that, as Pascal says, "the mystery of the Fall and of the transmission of original Sin, is a mystery at once most remote from our knowledge, and most essential to all knowledge of ourselves." "It is, indeed, itself incomprehensible: but without it we are incomprehensible." The facts of life force our thoughts to the recognition of the Fall, just as the attractions and repulsions of the heavenly bodies guide the astronomer to believe in the existence of an undiscovered star. "All hangs on that imperceptible point."¹ And so, I believe, it has come to pass that the doctrine of the Fall, and of a flaw and fault inherent in our manhood, has been at once the most scornfully rejected and the most generally acknowledged truth in all the Christian Faith. Surely it is both true and

¹ Pascal, *Pensées*, ii. v. sect. 4.

strange that a belief which seems at first so hard to realize, which is often thrust away with a confident impatience, can yet appeal to a vast array of witnesses, often unconscious, sometimes incredulous, of that which they have attested. Two great teachers, one of this University, one of my own—Archbishop Trench and Dr. Mozley—have shown with singular power the strength of this witness. Let me cite but a few instances.¹ When Plato speaks of the original nature of the soul—the soul as it is in truth—not marred as now it has been by communion with the body and other miseries, but pure as at its birth, and far more fair and bright than we have ever seen it; when he compares it in its present plight to the form of the god Glaucus, immortal and miserable, crippled and battered by the waves, disfigured by the clinging growth of shells and seaweed, so that the fishermen as they catch sight of him can hardly recognise his ancient nature: when again, surveying with a different temper of mind all the thanklessness and waste, the disasters and the sufferings of the world, Lucretius argues—

“Nequaquam nobis divinitus esse paratam
Naturam rerum : tantâ stat prædita culpâ” :

are they not indeed recognising with the insight of

¹ Cited by Archbishop Trench in the fifth and sixth of his *Hulsean Lectures* (1846), and by Dr. Mozley, in his 10th Lecture in *Lectures and other Theological Papers*.

master-minds that some great flaw and harm has got into the whole course of life: that there has been a universal falling away from that which should have been? And then again, see how, as Dr. Mozley says, "the old truth of Scripture collects, as it descends to this modern era of the world, the suffrages of modern thought." The cry of anger and of rebellion that breaks out in Byron and Shelley grows fiercest over this very thought of a great load of misery and remorse and self-contempt, which the conscience cannot ignore:—

"This hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of sin."

However it may be misnamed, however the moral sense may be crushed down to die under fatalism and despair, still there is the witness to a corruption, a perversion of humanity, wide as the world and deep as life. And thus in our own day, the shrewdest and most fearless student of mankind has set his seal upon this truth: and Mr. Browning, at the end of a grim story of the weird, morbid, senseless cunning of an avaricious girl, just glances at some current doubts about the Christian faith, and concludes:—

"I still, to suppose it true, for my part,
See reasons and reasons; this, to begin:
'Tis the faith that launched point-blank her dart
At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin,
The Corruption of Man's Heart."¹

¹ "Gold Hair: a Story of Pornic." *Poetical Works*, vol. vi. p. 69.

The witness of all our own experience ; of all current language, all common expectations, about the ways of man :—the witness, conscious and unconscious, of prophetic minds in every age :—the witness of daily life, of our journals with their columns full of ceaseless news about the fruits, the provocations, the deceitfulness, the anticipations, the triumphs or the punishments of sin :—the witness, interpreting all else, of our own hearts, with their surprises of meanness and cruelty and profanity, their black storms of temper, their contemptible pettiness of vanity, their wretched way of always spoiling a fair thought or a pure motive with some vulgarizing daub of selfishness :—all this whole weight and force of testimony, most manifold and yet unconscious, converges upon the truth of a world-wide disfigurement of human life : a pervading taint through all our history : a sense of something wrong in the ethical basis of our nature, thrust into every movement of the will. Let us allow the pressure, the fulness of this varied evidence to tell upon our minds : let it fill out with all the reality possible or bearable to us the great, familiar, seldom-heeded words of God's revealing : let it renew, replenish, re-present to us that simple, yet stupendous expression of St. John, "the Sin of the World" : let it force our thoughts up to the recognition of sin as a feature, a characteristic of this world in all

its life:—sin, not as a cloud floating for a minute across the sun, hiding, perhaps, from us the brightness, while the further landscape is still bathed in light and warmth:—no, but as a thick, heavy, penetrating mist, enwrapping, enshrouding all the earth:—let it tell us plainly that in all men everywhere there is something of that which makes each one of us sometimes shudder at himself. And then, it may be, our minds will stagger and our hearts begin to sink, at the dreary vision of that vast desolating gloom: “there is none good, then, no not one:” the misery and disgrace of sin are everywhere, lurking, brooding over every life, we think: and then, through the darkness, subtle whispers of temptation come to us. There be many that say, “Who will show us any good?” The lies of the cynic and the pessimist claim kindred with our thoughts: “yes,” they say, “all this is true; and we had better simply acquiesce in it. What have we to do with those vague ideals which have made so many restless and dissatisfied and remorseful and miserable?—when will men frankly recognize their proper level, and live there, and renounce those fruitless, wasteful hopes?” Oh! then, brethren, if in any way that worst of all infidelity, the disbelief in goodness, the despair of holiness, begins to creep about your souls and mingle with your thoughts, then turn and gaze, and gaze, where

through the rent cloud the pure white Light of God Himself has broken through. "He bowed the heavens and came down: and at the brightness of His Presence the clouds removed." One break there is in that uniform tenor of our history:—even the surpassing miracle of a sinless life: a life without one moment, one thought of failing or flagging from the willing obedience of sheer love even unto death. We can afford to realize and face the sin of the world, the sinfulness of our own hearts:—we do not need to trifle with the voice of conscience, or hide our eyes from the facts of life: we can bear to know the worst:—yes, because we know the best: because the darkness, the utter and unretrieved darkness is past, and the true Light now shineth: because we can turn from the gloom of sinful history to the perfect glory of the holiness of Christ our Lord.—His life has been most strikingly described as "a paradisaical insulation in humanity," "the section of the heavenly state crossing with the earthly."¹ Its record was written, examined, estimated, by those who had been constantly with Him, in most intimate community of life: observing all His bearing by night and by day, in anguish and in elation, in the security of most loving friendships, in the tension and harassing of unreasonable hostility, in weariness and hunger,

¹ Cf. Dr. Mozley. *Lectures*. etc., pp. 116-135.

and through the utmost provocations of brutality and insolence. They watched Him with the keenness of men who had staked with Him the whole hope of their lives, and who saw things going otherwise than as they had expected: He lived among them with that absence of reserve, of retirement, which is among the unreckoned trials of the very poor. He could not escape from observation and criticism when the strain of a public and hard-driven life was telling upon Him:— even in the seclusion of the hills, even in the silence of the night, He could not be alone. Poor and faulty as our best is, we know how hard, how nearly impossible it is to be always at our best: how slowly we gain the grace of equableness: how much indulgence of love we need from those who are much with us. It has been truly said that “the unconscious, involuntary movements of manner and countenance, the unstudied phrases of daily or of casual conversation, the emphasis of silence not less than the emphasis of speech, help in various ways to complete that self-revelation which every individual character makes to all around, and which is studied by all in each.”¹ And so was Jesus of Nazareth studied, hour after hour, by those who have left us their story of His life; through every channel of communion, with the widest variety of circumstances, they

¹ H. P. Liddon's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 277 (ed. 1882.)

saw what He was: gradually they discerned that there was one standard, and one alone by which He could be measured: it was a standard with which a single quiver of failure or divergence must be decisively inconsistent: and he who knew our Lord most intimately, he who was taken, if we may so speak, most deeply into the secrets of His Heart, has told the unqualified impression with which that character sealed for ever the devotion of his adoring soul:—"In Him is no sin:" "the Life was manifested, and we have seen It, and bear witness, and shew unto you that Eternal Life Which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." "The Word was God:" "and the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father."

Here let us stay for the present:¹ and suffer me to leave this thought with you. Over-against the great fact of the sin of the world stands the great fact of the sinlessness of Christ. We realize the full import of one side of the contrast only as we enter into the reality of the other. Only in the light of His Holiness can we see how far the world has fallen away from

¹ This Sermon was succeeded on the following Sunday by that which is here printed as the third in Part II., and entitled "The Reality of Grace."

God : only as we represent to ourselves the range and subtlety and eruelty of sin can we recognize the arresting and controlling miracle of His Perfect Holiness. And that recognition will bear directly upon our estimate and use of our own lives. It will rebuke all faithlessness, all mutterings of despondency, all thoughts of acquiescence for ourselves or for others in the world's evil as the world's law :¹—since “ for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil.” It will challenge us to lift our life above the level of conventional morality ; never to yield to the paralysing hints of self-approval, or draw a premature horizon to our hopes and aims ; since the hope that He has brought among us bids and strengthens us all to purify ourselves even as He is pure. And as we realize what He, all-Perfect and all-Love, vouchsafed to bear for us amidst the misery of our loveless life, it will lead us to kneel with a new glow of gratitude and adoration at His Feet—to ery with a new longing that we may never fall away from Him, fall baek under the darkness of our sin : “ O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that taketh away the sin of the world, have merey upon us. For Thou only art Holy, Thou only art the Lord : Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art Most High in the Glory of God the Father.”

¹ Cf. Archbishop Trench's *Hulscan Lectures*, p. 176.

II.

THE MIRACLE OF REPAIR.

“With His stripes we are healed.”—ISAIAH LIII. 5.

THERE seem to be few moments of the intellectual life more keen and happy than those which are quickened by the impulse belonging to the first stages of the study of physiology. The pleasure which Aristotle found in wonder grows ever more intense as the student moves nearer to the recognition of the inner mysteries of life : as he learns the incalculable subtlety of that which he had fancied simplest, and sees that every part and act of his own body may claim the dignity of an endless problem. Every hour shows him some deeper fitness, some more careful delicacy in the structure through which he acts : and the light of every day shines for him on some new range of curiosity and knowledge. With a fresh sense of reverence, or of exultation, he marks the countless ways of that unflagging and silent

energy which sustains his daily life : he wakes to some discernment of the changes, immense alike in minuteness and in multiplicity, which lead him on from moment to moment, from year to year, from birth to death :—and he finds in the uneventful course of his growth or failure, the ceaseless effort of an ordered force for the realization of a type which he has never known. He is happy, if his new learning only leads him to confess that he is “fearfully and wonderfully made :” happier, if it lifts his thoughts to the one Source of life, and wonder grows towards worship, as he owns, “Marvellous are Thy works, O Lord, and that my soul knoweth right well” : happiest, if in his excellent knowledge he sees the contrast between the cost and the profit of his life, and reaches the practical issue of the Psalmist’s physiology : “Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart ; prove me, and examine my thoughts : Look well, if there be any way of wickedness in me ; and lead me in the way everlasting.”

From most of us the veil of uniformity effectually hides the wonder of this living mechanism : we use its constant activity with as little thought, as little thankfulness, as we give to the unseen tides of light and heat. But besides that manifold process whose restless regularity we summarize as health, the life of the body appears at times in new manifestations and with new

claims upon our notice and our praise. In answer to some sudden need, the power whose continuous effort we ignore puts forth fresh energy in ways before untried: and we recognize in the exception the mystery which we slighted in the rule. So is it when by injury or disease some part of the body is broken, or wounded, or destroyed: when some force outside the course of Nature, abruptly or slowly mars the structure and order of its mechanism. For then appears the wonder of repair. Then the indwelling power, which since the first stir of change within the germ has been, through the steadfast methods of life and growth, urgent for the attainment of its specific type, turns to a new and unpractised mode of work: a mode which, though determined by an accident and unprecedented in the body's history, is yet as purposive and well-designed as is any process of habitual life. With a skill which it can never have rehearsed, and with materials slowly formed in adaptation to the strange and special need, the power of sustenance and growth appears also as the power of restoration, to repair the loss and harm of the wounded body. The violence which had seemed to mar for ever the course of development towards the destined perfection, seems to serve almost as a "felix culpa," to draw forth the inherent life into stronger energy and new inventiveness of help. And so the broken limb is

restored whole as the other: by strange processes of channelling and outgrowth new ways are fashioned for the eager blood: continuity and strength and feeling are renewed: and whole though not unscarred the living body presses on towards the end for which its Author formed and quickened it.

We are bidden, by the words of the text, and by very many other expressions of the same meaning in the Bible, to look for a spiritual significance in this physical power of repair: to see in it one example of a law wider than the grasp of science—the law that expresses our Creator's Will for the recovery of all lost perfection: "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." But before we seek the highest analogy of this Divinely purposed healing, suffer me, in the faith that it is one and the same Wisdom which "reacheth from one end to the other, mightily and sweetly ordering all things," to touch what we deem the lowest sphere of its manifestation. For it seems certain that below the level of the simplest life, recovery and repair are effected by processes analogous at least to those which we may trace in man. Even the broken crystal, under certain conditions, regains its characteristic shape, and strives towards its constant type.¹ Wherever we find evidence of an end or design

¹ Cf. Sir James Paget's *Lectures on Surgical Pathology*, vol. i. p. 119. (3d Ed., 1870.)

to be fulfilled in the attainment or maintenance of a definite form, there, also, we may find evidence of some power to repair the injuries, which that form may sustain from forces external to itself.

External to itself. Let us bear in mind this necessary limitation of the natural power of repair, as we rise in obedience to the words of the text, to seek its likeness in that great miracle of healing which ever overtasks the utmost strength of our praise and thankfulness. For in the moral and spiritual life of mankind there has been achieved a work of repair and renewal which at once resembles and utterly transcends the highest and best-ordered methods of the body's restoration. Here, too, the violence of injury and the cruelty of disease had seemed to cut off all hope that the foreshadowed type, the specific perfection, could ever be attained: here too there came forth from the springs of life a fresh energy, striving by new ways to repair the ruin of the wound: here too the shattered frame was restored, the slumbering sense awaked, and new channels opened for the coursing stream of health. But the truth of the analogy cannot hide the vastness of the difference which appears when we compare the need, the means, and the end of the analogous works. The inherent life of the body may be able by a quickened effort to repair the partial loss wrought by a force

external to itself: but it was no partial loss, no local injury which had maimed and deformed the spirit of man; it was not a merely and wholly external force which still dragged and beat him down from the glory for which God had fashioned him. No, the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint: the wound had reached the very shrine and centre of the implanted life, and the poison was flowing in the streams which should have been for its health. In the individual and in the race alike the ethical basis of development was conditioned by the perversion of past generations:¹ as the personal and spiritual being woke to self-consciousness he found that in the very depths of his life evil was present with him, and he by sin sore let and hindered in running the race that was set before him. Surely it was left for the sympathy of modern critics to praise or to regret the "indestructible health," the "unperplexed youth" of paganism: long before the image of Christ crucified had passed across the centuries it had ceased to be true that on the soul of the Greek there lay no burden of the world's pain, that the creation groaning and travailing together had touched him with no sense of anguish. Doubtless some might slightly heal the hurt of the people with a lying peace, with idolatrous worship and strange mysteries of purification:

¹ Cf. Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, sect. 93.

some might forget in the excitement or impurity of those manifold rites the home and destiny of the eternal soul: but others were awake to the misery of sins which they could not transcend, and evil which could not be expelled:—it was a true Athenian, and one who therefore should have been, according to some teachers, untouched by spiritual sickness, inured only to rhythmic movements of the passions and the spirit, who saw as in a vision the souls of the sinful dead,—marked by the scourge and covered with the wounds of perjury and iniquity, the impress of its own acts in each individual soul: deformed by fraud and imposture, crippled and crooked with lies: and by reason of insolence and pride and sensuality teeming with shapeless ugliness.¹ And from the most light-hearted courtier who ever tried in vain to lose himself in licence, we hear the dreariest utterance of the practical fatalism of unrepentant sin:

“Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosorem.”²

Herein lay the essential difference between the sickness of the soul and all those evils which the bodily life can rouse itself to repair:—that sin had marred the very power which should have wrought the deliver-

¹ Cf. Plato, *Gorgias*, 524 E.

² Horace, *Odes*, III. vi. 46-48.

ance: that it had troubled and perplexed the one faculty which could detect its subtlety, and touched that likeness of God which each man knows as himself. How should a man fight with foes who were not only of his own household, but of his own self? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" "Ὅταν τὸ ὕδωρ πνίγη, τί δεῖ ἐπιπίνειν; How could man rise towards the specific type when his ruin had reached that spiritual being to which had been intrusted the secret of his perfection? The one answer may be given in words taken from St. Athanasius—None could change the corruptible to incorruption save He Who also in the beginning made all things from nothing: none could renew in man the Image of God save the express Image of His Person: none could make the dying to be deathless save He Who is the Life, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Yes: "foolish men were plagued for their offence, and because of their wickedness: their soul abhorred all manner of meat, and they were even hard at death's door: He sent His Word, and healed them: and they were saved from their destruction."

"With His stripes we are healed." The repair of humanity by the precious Death of Christ must stand as a historical fact, for which no sufficient cause has ever been alleged, save the Divinity of Him in Whose Atonement the world is being taught to own the hour

when the fever left it. The challenge of St. Athanasius remains unanswered—"What say ye of Him, Who by easy words and men unskilled in speech, did what all the wisdom of Greece could never do: Who through all the world taught crowds who thronged His churches to give no heed to death and all to deathless life, to lift their eyes above the things of time, and set them steadfastly on things eternal: to scorn the praise of men, and strive only for the praise of God. And Who is He, Whose servants fight not one with another, but set the battle in array against wicked spirits, and defy the prince of the devils: so that they are pure in youth, and strong in trial: patient in tribulation, gentle in scorn, and careless of loss: yea, and they laugh at death itself, to become the martyrs of Christ?"¹ What wonder that presently the world looked back, and chose the day of His Incarnation as the birthday of its better life, and set aside the memory of the founding of Rome to date its years from the beginning of that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God? What wonder if the creative impulse of that second birth broke out into the gladness of a second boyhood, and the forgotten or deformed ideals of the Homeric age surpassed their early purity and strength in the knights of Arthur's Christian court? Yet it is not by

¹ Cf. S. Athan. *de Incarnatione Verbi*, xlvii, lii.

such signs as these that we must measure the healing work of the Atonement: its real achievement will never be a matter of history; not all the graces of the Saints will ever show us how far its end excels the best wonder of the body's repair, and rises above all analogy of nature. For while the increased energy of physical life can only restore the sick or wounded body that it may bear for a few years at most the wear and tear of this world, and yield but a little later, a little less reluctantly, to the sure force of age and death:—He Who came forth from the well of life to heal the broken heart of mankind and repair the havoc of sin, abides ever young and pure and strong in the nature which He has renewed: no injury or disease can ever drive Him back from the body which He has made His own, or prevail against His Indwelling Virtue: and in His unfailing Church we see at last that “indestructible health” which until He died no man had ever known. Already He has raised the true Type, the Specific Form of our race to reign for ever and ever at the Right Hand of the Father: and death and hell shall not prevail against His Will that they whom the Father hath given Him shall hereafter be like Him, seeing Him as He is.

On the deepest thoughts and the purest minds of the heathen world there had fallen from time to time the

passing gleam of a hope that there might be some power which could repair the ruin of a sinful race, and cut off the pitiless entail of guilt and misery. The faith, that, by some mysterious efficacy, a pure act of sacrifice might heal the hereditary taint of an accursed house, lay near to the most clear and constant forms under which a Greek conceived his relation to the Unseen. It was this belief which hindered his great conception of Nemesis from ever approaching to the immorality or despair of fatalism. He believed that a single act of pride or violence provoked a doom which held its course through sin and punishment, and sin and punishment, from one generation to another: he traced the dark bequest of Tantalus, or Labdacus, or Xerxes: and he felt that the power of outraged holiness was astir, and that there would be no peace for the wicked. But he also believed that there was an act which could arrest even the blind and ruthless curse: that the taint by which strength and cunning were smitten and sank down and died, was powerless against the sacrifice of a pure obedience. Such a sacrifice he saw in the utter submission, the prostrate humiliation of Œdipus, in the self-forgetful righteousness of Orestes' vengeance, in Antigone's allegiance to the heavenly Voice. And from such a sacrifice in every case there came forth a newness of life which could push back

the threatening death and wake the voice of joy and health in the dwellings of the righteous. So the thunderous air, the terror and agony of the *Œdipus Tyrannus* passes into the solemn, tender stillness of *Colonus*: and

“The promise of the morrow
Is glorious on that eve,
Dear as the holy sorrow
When good men cease to live.”¹

So in the *Electra* the same chorus which has sung of the everlasting doom, the ceaseless, weary violence of the sons of *Pelops*, breaks into a blessing when *Orestes*' service is fulfilled:—

“O seed of *Atræus*, after many woes,
Thou hast come forth, thy freedom hardly won,
By this emprise made perfect.”²

So does *Antigone* win deliverance from the black tide of the unwearied curse, and lay hold on the good hope of a love that is stronger than death. But in the cost of each such saving act, in the horror and anguish and cruelty and slaughter which gather round the sacrifice, the conscience of Greece assented to the law that without shedding of blood is no remission of sin: in the narrowness and imperfection of that which even the costliest and purest offering could achieve, it owned

¹ *The Christian Year*: 25th Sunday after Trinity.

² *Sophocles, Electra, ad fin.*, from E. H. Plumptre's translation.

that the true healing of the nations must wait for the obedience of One Who should be more than man, and for sorrow like unto which there was not any sorrow.¹

“With His stripes we are healed.” The Death of Jesus Christ is beyond all comparison or dispute the greatest event in the history of mankind: it has stirred the highest, purest, strongest passions that have ever taken shape in noble and effective lives: it is the eternal centre of the praises of Heaven. But it is more to us than all this: neither in the Heaven above nor in the earth beneath must we seek the most convincing and converting evidence of its healing virtue. No: none can measure the moral and spiritual repair of the Atonement elsewhere than in himself. Only when God enables us to rescue from the manifold clamour of sense, from the unreality of custom and the strife of tongues, that single, personal, immortal Being which is each one of us: only when with faltering and fearful steps we strive into the brightness of His Presence, and dare to set our secret sins in the light of His Countenance, Who requireth truth in the inward parts:—only then do we approach the realization of that which Christ hath done for our souls. For then, it may be, we discover the awful intimacy of sin: we feel the hopelessness of driving out the disease which has reached the very faculties of remedy and resistance:

¹ Cf. Archbishop Trench’s *Hulsean Lectures*, 1846, p. 222.

we see what David meant when he said, " My sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up." Our very penitence is a thing to be repented of: even in the act of confessing our sin we cannot wholly sever it from ourselves. We own that there is no power within us which can change the moral and spiritual consequences of a single sin: that, for all that we can do, we must bear the weakness and defilement of the past on to the bitter end. Through such recognition of our helplessness we may be led to a better knowledge of His work by Whose stripes we are healed: from Whose wounds there flowed a wealth of very life, to penetrate and renew our inmost self, and with great might succour us: Who alone can still the wasting fever of the heart, and stanch the hopeless issue of the blood: by Whose restoring grace our flesh may come again as the flesh of a little child. And whosoever feels the mysterious virtue of His Atonement flowing through every sense and power of the soul, till wonder and gratitude and love combine to claim the first utterance of its recovered life, may rise from the adoration of the Crucified, to say with a faith and hope which he has never known before: " I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the power of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

III.

THE REALITY OF GRACE.

He said unto me—"My grace is sufficient for thee."

2 COR. XII. 9.

WE tried (in a former sermon¹) to enter a little into the reality and import of the great contrast between the sin of the world and the sinlessness of Christ. We saw how Christianity assigns a place to all those facts which pessimism isolates and misuses: and how we can dare to let all the shame and darkness tell upon our hearts, because through it all, even in the depth of the gloom, we see One Human Life untouched, undimmed, in the perfect beauty of holiness—One Human Soul that was all love and truth—one utterance of the pure goodness of God in our manhood. There are trials known perhaps to some of us in which we are helped simply by looking at the glory of His self-sacrifice: the mists may be hanging heavily about the valley where we live and toil: but there is one height that flashes above us in the full splendour of the day. That Form of the Son of God made man—that

¹ That which is here printed under the title, "The Need of Healing."

aspect of unutterable tenderness and patience—that Image of a Love more gentle than the truest womanhood, and stronger than death itself, may be to us sometimes as was the statue of Arthur above the mighty hall upon the sacred mount of Camelot : where

“ Eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
 And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
 At sunrise till the people in far fields,
 Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
 Behold it, crying, ‘ We have still a King.’ ”¹

So may we sometimes, as we learn in inward and in outward conflict what the sin of the world really means, look up and lift up our heads as we see the wonder of His perfect purity Who was in all points tempted like as we are, and yet knew no sin.

But thus far, brethren, we are of course only standing upon the verge, as it were, of the Christian life: there are whole tracts and depths of truth beyond, such as we shall never quite explore in this world. For Christianity does not simply set the sinless obedience of Christ as a contrasted picture over against the sin of the world:—it comes to closer quarters with the enemy: the power of that perfect life is sent down into all the strife and misery and degradation of our sinful ways: it is thrown without reserve even into our dreariest and most humiliating struggles: point by point it fights on our side to drive back the dark force and tyranny of evil: to

¹ Tennyson, “The Holy Grail.”

reclaim the ground that sin has won : to restore what sin has marred : for, in St. Basil's words, "The dispensation of God and our Saviour concerning man is this : the recalling of him from the Fall, and his return to the friendship of God, from that estrangement which came by his transgression."¹ Yes, indeed :—as we take home to our minds, so far as we can grasp it, the thought of all that sin has done and is doing in the world—and in each one of us—we may not only recognize the great impressive miracle of the one sinless life : we may also learn something of that secret and glorious energy of God, which is ever working to reclaim our lives for Him : we may more worthily than before acknowledge that reality of which I would try to speak to you :—the reality of grace.

The close connection between a sincere recognition of all that is implied in the sin of the world and an appreciation of the reality of grace, has been clearly shown in the history of error. It held together the two denials which characterized the Pelagian heresy of the fifth century. For it has been truly said that "it was only by ignoring the great overthrow that Pelagius could dispense with the great restorative force."² He had to say "We have no inborn sin" in order that he

¹ *De Spiritu Sancto*, cap. 15, quoted by Bp. Bull, in "The State of Man before the Fall."

² *Anti-Pelagian Treatises of St. Augustine*, ed. W. Bright, Introduction, p. x.

might say "We need no inward grace." And at all times there is no more certain way to drain the life out of our religion, and to quench all brightness in the things of faith, than to trifle with the idea of sin—to mitigate the verdict of conscience in regard to it—to hurry past the fact of its existence, to try to explain it away, or to make ourselves easy in its presence. We disguise from ourselves the gravity of the disease, and then the remedy seems disproportionate and unnecessary. It is the self-same tendency of our own day which "attenuates spiritual evil on the one hand, and the special gifts and powers of the Gospel on the other." But when the conscience is unsophisticated and outspoken: when we do justice in our thoughts to the power and tyranny and malignity of sin: when we see how vile and cruel it is, how it ensnares and enslaves the souls of men:—how ceaselessly it presses in from every side: then we realize the great need, the urgent cry for help that pleads with God to deliver us from the evil: we feel that nothing save a real and living energy could cope with such a misery: that grace must be a reality if it is to deal with the sin of the world.

And—blessed be God—grace is indeed most real. It is an energy at least as true, as traceable in the large course of human history as any influence that we can find there: it may be a factor of the inner life as certain, as distinct as the faculties of reason or the

movements of impulse. But before we try to see its work, it is necessary that we should know, so far as a few words can tell it, what grace means in Christian thought and teaching. Let me then simply quote to you the concurrent words of three most careful writers :

“ Grace is power. That power whereby God works in nature is called power. That power whereby He works in the wills of His reasonable creatures is called grace.”¹

Again, “ Grace is a force in the spiritual order, not simply God’s unmerited kindness in the abstract, but such kindness in action as a movement of His Spirit within the soul, resulting from the Incarnation, and imparting to the will and the affections a new capacity of obedience and of love.”²

And yet once more : “ Grace is not simply kindly feeling on the part of God, but a positive boon conferred on man. Grace is a real and active force : it is the power that worketh in us, illuminating the intellect, warming the heart, strengthening the will of redeemed humanity. It is the might of the Everlasting Spirit, renovating man by uniting him, whether immediately or through the Sacraments, to the Sacred Manhood of the Word Incarnate.”³

Such is grace, as a Christian thinks of it—and lives

¹ J. B. Mozley, *On Predestination*, p. 302.

² W. Bright, *Anti-Pelagian Treatises of St. Augustine*, p. x.

³ H. P. Liddon, *University Sermons*, First Series, p. 44.

by it. It is the communication to us by the Holy Spirit of the new, the glorified Humanity of our Lord and Saviour. By it His sinless Life—that self-same splendour of purity that broke out upon the darkness of the world—is brought into our sinful souls. It is His strength—the strength that willed to die for love—made perfect in our weakness. It is that love of His defeating our selfishness: it is that great humility assuaging our pride: it is that perfect purity, cleansing away the defilement of our hearts and minds, that He, the lover of little children, may delight to be with us. It is the work, the Presence of God the Holy Ghost in us bringing to us all that our Saviour died and rose again to win for us:—it is—to sum up all in one term of endless import—it is the Life of “Christ in us, the hope of glory.” “Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” It is His Life, His Holiness, His Manhood ever advancing upon the soul; ever recovering for God what had been usurped and crushed in us by the subtle cruelty of sin.

But, of course, brethren, here again we are moving upon ground which may be resolutely denied to us. The doctrine of Grace is as little congenial to natural reason, or to a superficial view of human life, as is the doctrine of the Fall. But here too, I believe, a deeper and more appreciative study of the facts betrays the

working of some power for which it is very difficult to account by any merely natural estimate. As the truth of original sin is at once the most obscure and the most illuminating of mysteries: as all the phenomena of sinful history force us back to that imperceptible point where by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: so may Grace be said to be at once the most inscrutable and the most certain of all the forces that enter into the course of life. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth:—but as the great trees sway like reeds, as the clouds scud across the sky, as the ship leaps forward over the waves and strains towards the haven, you do not doubt the reality of the force that is astir. And Grace, the great energy in the spiritual order, Grace, the Almighty Power of God in the wills of His reasonable creatures, has its phenomena, its effects, at least as real, as difficult to deny or to explain away,—though not so difficult to ignore,—as such tokens of the viewless wind. We may indeed, at all events while we are young and active and resourceful, while we have comparatively little anxiety and plenty of distractions, stay more or less on the surface of things: in regard to ourselves and to others we may not go very deeply into the hidden realities that lie beneath: we may—though it is to our peril—

be rather as amateurs or critics than as labourers or soldiers in the tragic stress of life:—and so we may know little of the great hidden tides of force that move and strive in the depths of human souls. As children go on playing with their toys, contented in the fancies of their little world, while ruin is threatening their home and the sleepless anguish of anxiety breaking the hearts that love them: so can men for a while set out their partial array of phenomena, and throw themselves wholly into some special interest; in unimaginative carelessness or ignorance about that world of stern sincerity where the poor, the sorrowful, the suffering, the sorely tempted and the dying are fighting with despair or recklessness, and learning the reality of Grace. Alciphron, the minute philosopher of Bishop Berkeley's dialogue, the witty and freethinking gentleman of his day, assails Christianity from this very ground: Grace, he truly says, is the main point in the Christian dispensation; but then he complains thus:—"At the request of a philosophical friend I did cast an eye on the writings he showed me of some divines, and talked with others on this subject, but after all I had read or heard could make nothing of it, having always found whenever I laid aside the word Grace and looked into my own mind a perfect vacuity or privation of all ideas. And"—he adds with ingenuous self-confidence—"as I am

apt to think men's minds and faculties are made much alike, I suspect that other men, if they examine what they call Grace with the same exactness and indifference, would agree with me that there was nothing in it but an empty name." Alciphron is opposed by Euphranor, with an argument which is quite sufficient for its purpose. He is invited to contemplate force as he had contemplated grace—"itself in its own precise idea," excluding the consideration of its subject and effects:—and here, too, he is compelled to discover the same mental vacuity and privation: he closes his eyes and muses a few minutes, and declares that he can make nothing of it:—and so his contention, if it has any value, would involve the denial of force as well as Grace; and for this he is not prepared.¹ But what strange narrowness of horizon—what failure of sympathy and imagination—what readiness to be soon contented with one's own account of one's own fragment of the world—is shown when Alciphron, or any one else, can think that there is nothing to be found or studied where Christians speak of Grace: that "a perfect vacuity and privation of ideas" is a philosophic state of mind in regard to it:—that it can be dismissed with scorn or compassion as a mere empty name. For Grace is not

¹ Bp. Berkeley, *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*. Dialogue vii. §§ 4-10.

offered for attention and consideration as a mere subjective phenomenon, simply an experience of the inner life, supported by a bare assertion, incapable of tests and evidence:—no—it has its facts to point to—its results written in the history of men, and patent in their daily life:—its achievements, accredited to it by those who were certainly nearest to the occurrences—achievements hardly to be explained away, and never to be ignored by any mind that claims the temper of philosophy. The effects assigned to Grace in life and history are as serious and distinct, as necessarily to be recognized and dealt with, as the effects of force or sin or passion. Take but one great instance out of history. When the power, the dignity, the character of Rome was breaking up: when the great imperial city, in the full pride of a prestige which had seemed throughout the world imperishable and divine, was falling ever deeper and deeper into the decay and death of all morality: when poets and historians had seen and spoken out the plain truth that society was sinking down and down from bad to worse: when all the principles of national or individual greatness seemed discredited and confused: when vice in naked shamelessness was seizing upon tract after tract of human life:—then suddenly the whole drift of moral history, the whole aspect of the fight, was changed. A new force appeared upon the

scene: a new power came among the failing ranks: and with contrast as strange, with revulsion as complete, as when David stood out from among the frightened, helpless host to face the insolence and terror of the Philistine, the battle turned, and the shout of victory went up from the armies of the living God. "It seems to me," says the Dean of St. Paul's, "that the exultation apparent in early Christian literature, beginning with the Apostolic Epistles, at the prospect now at length disclosed, within the bounds of a sober hope, of a great moral revolution in human life—that the rapturous confidence which pervades those Christian ages, that at last the routine of vice and sin has met its match, that a new and astonishing possibility has come within view, that men, not here and there, but on a large scale, might attain to that hitherto hopeless thing to the multitudes—goodness—is one of the most singular and solemn things in history." "The monotony of deepening debasement," "the spell and custom of evil," was broken now: and "an awful, rejoicing transport filled the souls of men as they saw that there was the chance—more than the chance—the plain forerunning signs, of human nature becoming here, what none had ever dared it would become, morally better."¹ That was a real achievement if anything in

¹ R. W. Church, *The Gifts of Civilization*, pp. 183-185.

history is real. And it proceeded from a source which was to all appearance absurdly unlikely to leave any mark at all on human life. We know who were the chief ministers of that astounding revolution. Some stories of their lives, some fragments of their teaching, are in our hands. They knew that it was a movement of immeasurable greatness in which they were engaged; and it is hard to see why we should entirely set aside their own account of the force that was astir in their work, the secret of their triumphs. Surely it is no unreal imagination, no empty name, to which with one accord they point:—behind the reality of that unrivalled change there was the reality of inward Grace. “Not I, but the Grace of God which was with me”: “Not I, but Christ liveth in me”: “I was made a minister, according to the gift of the Grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His Power”: “This is the true Grace of God wherein ye stand”: “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.”

Such is the unanimous witness of all those through whose lives and labour God wrought that mighty work and renewed the face of the earth. That rallying of all hope, that surprising reassertion of goodness against the confident tyranny of evil, was the work of Grace. Grace was the power that came in and turned the issue

of the fight, the tide of human history. Surely it is a wonderful and inspiring thought, that the force, the potency which achieved the noblest change the world has ever seen was a hidden energy sent forth from God into the hearts and wills of a few ignorant and undistinguished men:—that amidst all the pride and majesty and cleverness and might of the Roman Empire, the future of the world depended most upon that secret, silent force of Grace:—that in truth the strongest power, the most fruitful germ of life, astir on earth while Rome was thought eternal and supreme, was that Presence of the Crucified and Ascended Nazarene, which came to the souls of His faithful people as they gathered in some bare, poor place to celebrate their daily Eucharist. Ay, a wonderful thought indeed it is—a thought that should chasten our estimates of greatness, and silence our whispers of despondency. But how much more it means to us when we concentrate our minds, our hearts on this:—that now, to-day, that self-same force, unspent, unwearied, is ever with us—ever at our call. That the same strong Grace of the Almighty flows in all its fulness by the same ministry through the same Divinely ordered means: that the energy which broke forth as the day-spring from on high and bade the world to hope again, is striving now through all the world to deliver men from evil and to make them holy:

—is ready now to make us more than conquerors over all that keeps us back from God and from the perfect freedom of His service. His Grace is sufficient for us:—His Grace which day by day does change the hearts and lives of men: His Grace which gives the poor their wondrous patience and simplicity and trust: His Grace which can uphold a gentle, self-distrustful woman through the dreariest and most revolting tasks of charity and compassion: His Grace which holds His servants' wills resolute and unflagging through the utmost stress of overwork and suffering, or in the weary hours of sickness, or into the very face of death:—His Grace which changes pride to penitence and humility, which wins the sensual to chastity, the intemperate to self-control, the hard and thankless to the brightness of a gentle life. His Grace which everywhere, in the stillness where He loves to work, is disentangling the souls of men from the clinging hindrances of sin, repairing, bit by bit, the ruin of our fall, renewing to all and more than all its primal beauty that Image and Likeness of Almighty God in which at the first He fashioned man to be the lord, the priest, the prophet of the world. So is His Grace ever working, striving round about us:—so is it ever ready to work and strive and win, be sure, in each of us. No aim is too high, no task too great, no sin too strong, no trial too hard

for those who patiently and humbly rest upon God's Grace: who wait on Him that He may renew their strength. And if you would know in brief the character that Grace achieves in sinful man, turn to the Epistle for this day.¹ There you will read the antithesis of all that sin has wrought in human hearts. For love, pure love towards God and man: this is the work of Grace: this is the very essence of the Christian life. As the Grace of God changes a man's heart this is the real difference which it makes: that he begins to grow in love;—in love, which, even here, never faileth; in love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." The reality of Love is this world's witness to the reality of Grace. But far beyond this world the Grace of God pursues its work: it halts not nor is satisfied till it has perfected in us that life of Love: it knows no limit till it brings us to the Endless End: it, it only breaks the solitude of dying: as all else is laid aside or falls away from us only that hidden Presence stays with us: till at last, in the rest of Paradise, and in the Love and Joy of Heaven, we understand in truth the reality and the sufficiency of Grace.

¹ Quinquagesima Sunday.

IV.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF PITY.

“Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?”—S. MATTHEW XVIII. 33.

IT has often been noticed how our Lord's beginning of miracles in Cana of Galilee was an act significant and representative of the transforming energy of His Incarnation upon human nature and human life. Upon that “birthday of His mighty deeds,” when,

“The water reddening into wine
Proclaimed the present Lord,”

it was no transient flash of unique generosity that He manifested forth, but a sustained and characteristic glory of the work for which He had been made man. For as at His bidding the pale and thin and tasteless element flushed and deepened to that gift of God which maketh glad the heart of man: so was the human nature which He assumed advanced to a new wealth of beauty and nobility, and replenished with all the perfections it could receive.¹ While the Manhood which the Son of God put on kept all its characteristic proper-

¹ Cf. Archbp. Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, pp. 103, 123, 124.

ties unchanged, and never moved beyond those limits and restraints which belong to its reality and truth; still it was raised to an excellence and majesty undreamt of: He made honourable the robe He deigned to wear: and God anointed Him as very man with the oil of gladness above His fellows.¹ And then, from this ennobled and transfigured manhood, there streamed forth a new light over all the thoughts, the conceptions, the estimates of human life. It was as though He had a tenderness, a loving reverence, for all the home associations, all the familiar circumstances of the nature which He had wedded:—nothing should be cast away which could be purified and perfected: nothing was worthless which could be worked into the new life, and have a place in the new home. In the widest sense, He came not to destroy, but to save: not to supersede, but to renew. And so gradually a new aspect and character came upon all the old relations of social life: fatherhood and brotherhood: service and command: teaching and learning: obedience and authority:—these were to be in the kingdom of God as welcome and as entire as the humanity round which they clustered: but they were also to share its exaltation and advancement:—and a new spirit would make them mean what they had never meant before.—And even so was it

¹ Cf. *Ecclus.* 1. 11; Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* v. liii. liv.

also in the field of ethics—so did the virtues of the old world pass on to be transfigured into the graces of the new. Moralists had marked and defined the various traits of goodness again and again before Christ came: they had sketched, as it were, detached studies of its several parts:—but these received a new look and meaning when they were seen in the living unity of the Divine Life:—when they were informed and animated and enkindled by the vital principle of Christian love. It was this that gave substance and reality to the conception of heathen ethics: the scattered points of excellence were caught up into the one perfect character of Christ: the fragments of goodness became “complete in Him,” and were seen in the clear and uncrowded harmony of their mutual relations: no longer as classified specimens in an ethical museum, but as living members of that one quickening and enlightening grace of love, which is the very bond of peace and of all virtues. It is this that makes the difference, merely in moral tone, between any treatise of pre-Christian ethics and the *Imitation of Christ*. In Him was shown at once the manifold variety and the perfect unity of goodness: for

“parted into rainbow hues
In sweet harmonious strife
We see celestial love diffuse
Its light o'er Jesus' life.

God by His bow vouchsafes to write
This truth in heaven above ;
As every lovely hue is light,
So every grace is love.”¹

And as those several traits of goodness, which all along had helped the world, now took their places round that central grace, and received the radiance of its warmth and brightness, they had their share in the great advancement of human life by the Incarnation of the Eternal Word: they were flushed with a new glow of generosity and richness: they were “changed from glory to glory,” “even as by the Spirit of the Lord”: because God had indeed sent forth His Spirit and renewed the face of the earth.

Let us try to mark this great change as it passes over that moral quality of which the text speaks. Let us see how the aspect, the meaning, and the worth of pity, were affected by the work of Jesus Christ our Lord:—how differently the character of pitifulness appears on the one hand to the most careful and appreciative of heathen moralists, and on the other in the light of Christian Faith.

We may escape all suspicion of injustice to the former side of this contrast by looking back to Aristotle for a non-Christian estimate of pity. It would be easy to quote startling and even revolting utterances of the

¹ *The Christian Year*: Quinquagesima Sunday.

later Stoicism: and in every age, says the writer of *Ecce Homo*, "the Christian temper has shivered at the touch of Stoic apathy."¹ We may get a vivid impression of the reason for this recoil when we read in Seneca that pity is a vice of the pusillanimous, dejected at the sight of other men's evils: and that it is therefore most congenial to the most depraved: that it differs from clemency as superstition differs from religion: that it is "aegritudo animi" or "vitium animorum nimis miseriae faventium."² No exhortations to practical beneficence can take away the repulsive harshness of these expressions. But it may be said that they are not really or widely representative: that they are marked with the paradoxical character of the system to which they belong: that they have all the narrowness of relentless inferences from an isolated principle. And so we may do better if we pass them by, and go back to learn how pity seemed of old from the words of the most just, appreciative, and catholic of ancient philosophers. Aristotle was incapable of the pettiness and insincerity of wilfully depreciating or caricaturing any fragment of moral excellence: and we may, I think, take his definition of pity as very fairly representing the pre-

¹ Quoted by Bp. Lightfoot in his *Essay on St. Paul and Seneca: Ep. to the Philippians*, p. 320.

² Seneca, *De Clementiâ*, Lib. II. Capp. v. vi.

valent estimate of the quality:—the estimate with which, for instance, an Athenian might, in his day, desire or deplore, encourage or repress, the indications of pity in his children's character. He says then,—in language familiar to many—"Let pity be a feeling of pain on the occasion of evident evil which is deadly or painful, and undeserved: evil which a man might expect to befall himself also, or some one of those who are dear to him: and that when it seems to be near at hand."¹

Two points are prominent in this conception of pity: both are touched again and emphasized in later passages of the Rhetoric. Pity is limited to undeserved suffering:—and so he says that the young are prone to pity, because they suppose all people to be good or at least better than they are: and so suppose that their sufferings are unmerited.² When trouble is deserved, when a man has provoked his own misery, in the course either of nature or of justice, he is outside the range of pity: his distress may be passed by without a pang or quiver of sympathy. But still more emphatic is the repetition of the point that we only pity in others those evils which we fear for ourselves. On this ground the utterly wretched and the supremely happy are, according to Aristotle, untouched by pity: for they think that they have nothing to fear for themselves.

¹ Ar. *Rhet.* B. viii. 2. Cf. also Ar. *Poet.* vi. 2. ² *Id. ib.* xii. 15.

So too the weak in body and in mind, οἱ ἀσθενεῖς καὶ οἱ δειλότεροι, are prone to pity: and the old also, as well as the young; for "they think that all troubles are close at hand for themselves to suffer: and this makes men full of pity for others."¹ And this which Aristotle had observed is caricatured by Seneca, in the dictum that you may be sure a man's own eyes are failing if you see him especially moved at the sight of ophthalmia.²

The objects, then, of pity are limited to the innocent: the subjects must be insecure in their circumstances, or weak and timid in themselves. Selfishness and cowardice are plainly hovering in the moral atmosphere most favourable to the growth of pity: and the man who takes especial care of himself and is easily alarmed for his own present comfort or uncertain dignity will be the most likely to be moved by pity at the sight of the unmerited anguish of a guiltless sufferer. How sudden a flash of revelation, how strange a revolution of feeling, must have rushed upon the soul of one who had been trained in thoughts like these when he heard of pity as the sacred attribute of the Almighty and Eternal God. Yes, pity was transformed indeed when it appeared among men as that which o'ertopped the very Might of the Most High: that

¹ Ar. *Rhet.* B. viii. 4, xiii. 15.

² *De Clementiâ*, ii. vi.

longing within the Mind of God which could only be uttered in the death of the Incarnate Son. God manifested as the Pitiful: God Himself full of compassion: an inconceivable act of pity chosen as the very way in which He would make His nature known to men:—here was a disclosure of strange possibilities and depths undreamt of in the quality which had held so poor a place among the elements of character. God, Who could not fail or fear or falter, coming forth out of the clouds and darkness that are round about Him, only in sheer pity: and that, not for the guiltless, not for miseries unmerited: but for those who had denied Him, those who were provoking Him every day, those who had sinned against Him in thought and word and deed, by their own fault, their own most grievous fault. Yet—“in all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them: in His Love and in His Pity He redeemed them: and He bare them and carried them all the days of old.” And this, the great key-note of His Advent, sounds on through all the course of His humiliation. Very pitiful and of tender mercy:—so He ever moves among His fellow-men; He, the Sinless and Almighty. No gentle and sensitive woman ever drew near to suffering or sorrow with a pity so delicate and entire as His. No misery seems so remote from the outward circumstances of His life,

no anguish is so well-deserved that He can pass it by:—there seems no limit and no denial in the generosity of His compassion:—and from His Presence, even in all the strength and majesty of perfect holiness, there ever streams a grace and radiance of pity at which the most secret sorrows of the world are disclosed, and turn to Him, as flowers in the sunlight. Even when no special word of compassion is recorded we can feel in all His bearing the pity that is yearning to help. It is pity that fills His Heart as He deals with the dulness of conscience, the bewilderment of moral sense, in the Samaritan woman talking with Him at the well;—as He watches with anxiety and affection the ruler halting between the love of money and the life everlasting: as He warns St. Peter of the trial that lies before him, and as He turns and looks on him in the pitiable moment of his failure. In pity He accepts the ministry of the woman that was a sinner: in pity He speaks the pardon of her who had been taken in adultery. And day after day He labours ever in the same unwearied pitifulness to relieve those common miseries which never seem to Him to lose their pathos in their multitude. Those whose work brings them into very frequent contact with suffering and distress know how hard it is to keep their sensitiveness unimpaired, and their touch quite delicate and

gentle:—to be as ready and reverent in compassion with the hundredth sorrow as with the first:—but through all His ceaseless occupation with misery no shadow of dimness or fatigue passes over the clear brightness of our Saviour's sympathy: "In all their affliction He is afflicted." In every scene of His ministry we can trace the same unique perfection of majestic strength blended with the utmost beauty of tenderness. But it was in the last great act of His Self-surrender that men saw to the uttermost what the Divine Pity could be and bear.—In the sacristy of the Cathedral at Regensburg there is a casket of very early workmanship: and upon one end of it is a striking representation of the Crucifixion. It recalls, though with a wide contrast, the opening scene of the *Prometheus Vincit*: and it carries us very far into the true doctrine of the Atonement. The Divine Sufferer, the willing Victim, the Saviour of mankind, hangs upon His Cross. Two Angels, hovering in the air, are driving in more firmly the nails which hold Him there in shame and anguish: and their names are written by them: not, as in the ancient tragedy, *Might and Force*: no; but on the one side it is *Obedience*, on the other it is *Pity*, that drives home the nail through the pierced Hand of God Incarnate. Obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross: very pitiful and of tender mercy, even in

death itself: such is the revelation of the Most High in the history of mankind: so is the knowledge of the glory of God vouchsafed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?” What a challenge it seems if we try to think of it as spoken to us by Him Whose Hands still show those wounds! What an appeal it makes to us, what a standard of pity it proposes, if we really believe that it was in pity for the sin, the blindness, the misery, the ignorance, the infatuation of us men, that the Son of God so suffered and so died. “Even as I had pity on thee”—it seems to allow no limit either to the range of pity or to the self-surrender it may exact:—for whom did He exclude from the compass of those outstretched Arms? or where did He arrest the cost and bounty of His Sacrifice? What becomes of the “vice of the pusillanimous,” of the amiable weakness of the feeble and faint-hearted, when pity thus appears as the foremost attribute of God made man, and the sustaining motive of that unmatched endurance? We cannot wonder if through the generations that look back to Calvary pity has revealed a dignity and beauty unsuspected in earlier ages: if it has received such a place and privilege as has been vindicated for it by two at least of the greatest of Christian moralists: or if to hearts that glow with the love and

live by the grace and strive after the pattern of that most Pitiful Redeemer, all hardness and indifference, all carelessness about the sins and sufferings of others, all harshness of thought and voice, seem as the very strongest and dreariest signs how far the world has fallen back from God.—“Even as I had pity on thee.” Let us mark, brethren, very briefly, three clear changes which that great appeal has wrought in the character of pity : three chief tokens of its purification and advancement as it passes into the kingdom of God and is numbered with the graces that adorn His Saints and manifest His glory.

First, then, pity has ceased, within the school of Jesus Christ, to be in any sense an indication or congenial quality of weakness or timidity. It has been seen and recognized as the attribute of the Almighty, the Eternal :—it is no longer to be suspected as the mark of a frail and precarious condition. Rather may it be felt, when it is pure and true, to be indeed a property of the strongest, the noblest, the most commanding types of character.¹ There is often in those who watch it some sense of a mysterious power living a hidden life in the very tenderness and meekness of true pity : something perhaps which throws a new light

¹ Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. i. 188-197 : and also an article by Mr. Meredith Townsend in the *Contemporary Review* for June 1888 (p. 802), on the question, “Will England retain India?” “‘The substantial difference,’ said a great pundit once to me, ‘between the English and us is not intellectual at all. We are the brighter, if anything ; but you have pity, and we have not.’”

on that surprising inference of the *De Profundis*—
“There is mercy with Thee, O Lord: therefore shalt
Thou be feared.” Yes, in the humble and unselfish
exercise of pity there is a moral strength and dignity
which may be felt rather than defined:—it is not pity
that men mostly take to hide their consciousness of
uncertainty or weakness. Rather, in the vast majority
of instances, if you could get behind the various traits
of hardness and self-assertion and disregard of feeling
which are sometimes supposed to adorn a vigorous
character, you would find a lurking uneasiness of mind
or heart, and a suspicion, unwelcome and repressed,
that the position is not quite so sure and adequate as it
must be somehow made to appear. The purity of pity
is the prerogative of strength. There is perhaps no
nobler figure among all the conceptions of modern
poetry than that of Arthur, in all the strength of
righteousness and chivalry and faith and fearlessness,
Arthur, most loving and most wronged, standing, in
sorrow and pity beyond words, over the prostrate form
of her whose sin has been his kingdom’s curse and the
ruin of his life:—

“He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neighed
As at a friend’s voice, and he spake again:
‘Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes!’

I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.

Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
 Forgives : do thou for thine own soul the rest.'"¹

Surely it would be worth a resolute and lifelong effort to grow towards the very fulness of moral and spiritual strength, if so, by the grace of God, we may move among the sorrows and the sins of men with some semblance of the pity of our Lord and Saviour.

"Among their sorrows and their sins." Yes: for here is the second difference which the example of the Crucified has borne into the conception and the use of pity. It is no longer limited to be ἐπὶ φαινομένῳ κακῷ τοῦ ἀναξίου τυγχάνειν²—it does not wait with cold deliberation for the verdict of the critical faculty, and reserve itself wholly for unmerited misery:—No: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us":—and therefore Christian pity will not be restricted to deserving cases. Doubtless in all practical measures of relief we are bound to endeavour, so far as we can, to find out and to do what will be most really and permanently helpful: only remembering that we have a right to protect ourselves, by a charitable estimate of probabilities, from

¹ Tennyson: *Guinevere*.

² *Ar. Rhct. B. viii. 2.*

the cruelty, the injustice, and the guilt of having rejected any appeal which we should have welcomed:—of having ever turned away our face from Christ Himself coming to us in His poor. But whatever discretion we may be obliged to use in measures of relief, let us resolutely vindicate the freedom of pity and recognise its universal obligations, its persistent call to action. In all our impurity and guilt, in all our self-will and lovelessness Christ pitied us and died to save us: He, Who else must have pronounced the sentence, took the sin upon Himself and bore its doom: He suffered for us, the just for the unjust: and it is He Who pleads with us as we realise how the world is full of the self-inflicted miseries of sin:—as we wonder how we can approach it, how we can deal with it:—“Shouldest not thou also have compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?” Is there anything in all the range of wretchedness more deeply and utterly pitiable than the misery which men bring or admit to themselves:—the misery of a sinful life? To see how the evil habit stealthily closed in upon the soul:—to understand the sophistry by which it was excused, disguised, misnamed:—to know how, one by one, the better hopes, the fixed points of principle, faded out of the dim life: how steadily the self-delusion grew more and more complete, and the uneasy

consciousness of it less and less troublesome : to mark how the restlessness, the efforts of self-assertion in the conscience grew feebler and more misdirected, like the last struggles of one who is fighting against an opiate :—surely nothing could move a sadder pity, a more earnest eagerness to help, than such a dreary tragedy as this. And may we not be sure that in many lives less flagrantly disastrous, less evidently wrecked, than those of which we first may think, there has often been, before the hardness or frivolity or untruthfulness or conceit closed in on them and got the mastery, some half-hearted struggle against degeneracy, some wofully inadequate wish to keep up to the mark, which would touch us with sheer pity if we knew it ? It was only gradually that the better purpose, the generous enthusiasm, the sense of duty died away : only little by little that the knowledge and the love of God, the zeal for His Name, the thoughts of self-oblation for His service, grew remote and hazy, and the poorer estimate of life and work and self gained power over heart and mind. Yes—be sure it is so, brethren : behind many a career that at first only tempts us to impatience or indignation there is a past which, for all the faults and sins that mingle with the misery of every stage in its slow decadence, should rather move us with a sorrowful and longing sense of pity : rather make us most patiently

and tenderly watchful if in any way, through any rift in the unlikely surface of the life, God may suffer us to bear back anything of the hope which once was in the soul : to fan some smouldering ember of the fire that once glowed and flashed within.

Is not this, I would venture to suggest, high among the elements of Christian thought and feeling in the poetry of one who perhaps most faithfully represents the moral difficulties of our day—that he is continually calling pity into exercise upon this mingled pathos of sin and sorrow? Mr. Browning shows, I think, two essential characteristics of the Christian attitude towards sin, as it has been defined by a great teacher in this University :¹ the first, that he never deliberately makes light of any known sin : the second, that he never admits it to be invincible. But with unerring and most delicate discrimination he leads us through all the mazes of the world of motives : never himself forgetting, never encouraging us to forget, the sinfulness of sin, he traces beyond all that we could have dreamt the refinement of its deceitfulness, the subtlety of its palliations : he forces us to see how complex and difficult it is to give the judgment on our fellow-sinner which had seemed so simple and direct : and while he warns us, at our peril, to be ever watchful, ever

¹ H. P. Liddon. *Some Elements of Religion*, p. 145.

strictly and accurately truthful with ourselves, he seems to take away almost all barriers that could limit our pity in a world where the hidden springs, the secret and unsuspected influences, are so manifold and confused. He helps us, indeed, to give reality in our thoughts and words to that act of discernment which is at once most necessary and most rare—to sever, and to contemplate with an utterly different regard, the sinner and the sin: to hate and loathe the sin for the lies it has put on and the ruin it has wrought: to turn with a humble and sorrowful distress to the poor defiled, misguided soul: hearing, as it were, ever ringing in our ears His constant challenge Who came into the world to save sinners:—“Shouldst not thou also have had compassion upon thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?”

“Even as I had pity on thee.” Let us notice lastly how the faith of Jesus Christ protects the exercise of pity from a sin which easily besets it. Seneca describes with probable accuracy the insolence and scornfulness of those who in his day wished to seem pitiful: and he contrasts their contemptuous almsgiving with the pitiless and dispassionate munificence of the wise man.¹ It is easy to see how the feeling of pity may be distorted and depraved into the service of personal vanity:—how,

¹ *De Clementiâ*, II. vi.

in the perversity of our hearts, we may abuse it for the gratification of our pride, and find a miserable pleasure in the sense of power and superiority which we may think it justifies. But certainly, brethren, before we so turn it to an occasion of falling we must take it right away from the ground, the sanction, the standard given to it by Christianity: we must get rid of the Christian associations of pity, if we want it to minister to our self-importance or enhance our good opinion of ourselves. "Even as I had pity on thee":—a long retrospect may rise up against us as we think over those words: and we are sternly recalled to the humility and reverence which are the proper attributes of a genuine compassion. That pity of Almighty God:—where did it find us? how terribly we needed it: how long it had to wait for us and bear with us—how sorely and how constantly we need it still. There have been times, perhaps, in our life at which now we seldom look: sins which later years and better ways have put far back in our memory:—but it was only the pity of Christ which held to the hope of good in us, and brought us where we are. And on and on He has been very pitiful with us: most patient with our blindness, our slowness, our little progress, our frequent falls: how can we ever be ungentle or self-satisfied or arrogant in the exercise of pity, when we recall the greatness of our

necessity, the vastness of His pitying forbearance :—we who ever need to pray to Him “ Call to remembrance, O Lord, Thy tender mercies : and Thy loving kindnesses which have been ever of old : O remember not the sins and offences of my youth : but according to Thy mercy think Thou upon me, O Lord, for Thy goodness ”? Surely there should rather be an influence of chastening in the very privilege of pity : something that might silence and subdue our self-assertion : something like the humiliation and the feeling of shame that may come to us at times with the sense that we are trusted so far more than we have deserved to be. God puts within our reach this power of helpfulness, this ministry of pity : He is ever ready to increase His grace in our hearts, that as we live and act among all the sorrows of the world we may learn by slow degrees the skill and mystery of consolation : not only has He had pity on us, but He also suffers us to know the blessing and the happiness of entering, with the gentleness of a pity not utterly unlike His own (just because it is indeed His gift) into the troubles and the wants of others. “ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” There is no surer way of steadfast peace in this world than the active exercise of pity : no happier temper of mind and work than the lowly watching to see if we can

lessen any misery that is about us: nor is there any better way of growth in faith and love.

The heavens will never grow dark above us in this life, while we guard in our hearts the grace of pity: and after this life we may go out into the mystery that lies beyond with His own clear word of promise: when we need it perhaps most terribly, we shall find most richly the pity which has been with us all along: for it is the beatitude of the pitiful that they shall obtain pity.

V.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF HOPE.

“The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.”—ROMANS VIII. 26.

ONLY in anxious self-distrust and watchful reverence can we draw near to think of Him Whose Advent we celebrate to-day.¹ There is none in Heaven or Earth nearer to us than He : yet there is none Whose Presence is more deeply hidden from every sense. Even as we rise to worship Him, even as we prepare the words with which to praise His Name, we find that He Himself is within our unready souls, that the high thoughts which our stammering lips hold back are His, not ours : that He “knoweth our downsitting and our uprising, and understandeth our thoughts long before : for lo, there is not a word in our tongue, but He knoweth it altogether.” Most mysterious is the manner of His Eternal Being, translated in no human analogy, reflected by no human kinship : for Fatherhood and Sonship we

¹ This Sermon was preached on the morning of Whitsunday in the University Church.

may, by God's mercy, in some measure realize: but no earthly relation is revealed as the shadow or symbol of the Twofold Procession of the Holy Ghost. And surely, not less inscrutable is the manner of His Presence and work in the human soul. Veiled by the very openness of His Divine Person, unseen because He is so near, unrecognized for very intimacy, there is no depth of personality, no secret centre of character whither He will not come: and even the soul which He purifies and strengthens may only discern Him in its own new purity and strength. The bodily eye can never see in its simplicity the light whereby it sees all else: and the Spirit of Truth is Himself hidden from the Soul which owes its sight to His Illumination. Only as we yield ourselves to His transforming Hand, only as we take the form which is His Work, we move onward in the knowledge of Him: only when that work is perfect may we see Him, Who now dwelleth in us, face to face, and know Him as we are already known, waking to the recognition of His unfailing Presence. So do children learn at last the love which has been through many years too close and constant to be seen: so sometimes does the beauty of the place in which we live startle us into self-reproachful wonder at the grace and glory to which nothing but familiarity has made us blind.

We stand then in the presence, we are called to the

praise, of One Who hideth Himself, Who goeth by us, and we see Him not, Who passeth on also, and we perceive Him not; Whose brightness is as the light, yet there is the hiding of His power. But though He be hidden from the eyes of all living, though we cannot tell whence He cometh and whither He goeth, we may watch and forward and pray for His work, in others and in ourselves: we may discover and estimate the unearthly impulses and attractions which He exercises, as astronomers can be sure of the presence and influence of some unseen star, by the new force which breaks in on the order of the heavens. So, by His patient help, would I try to think and speak of Him to-day; tracing His Handiwork in a grace of which all are conscious, but which none can command: and referring to His Unseen Presence within us a force which draws us out of the natural orbit in which the love of self and of this world would hold us wearily revolving.

“We know not what we should pray for as we ought.” About fifty years after St. Paul thus wrote from Corinth to the beloved of God in Rome, these words were re-echoed from the very heart of Roman society with a clearness, an intensity, and a pathos such as the world has seldom heard and can never forget. Only when the faculty of criticism ceases to be interested in the study of character, and when the moral sense has lost

all sympathy with a noble scorn and hatred of sin : only when men can hear with indifference the unanswered cry for light, going forth from a strong soul to lose itself in the silent darkness, only when they themselves have ceased to desire and strive and fail, will the tenth Satire of Juvenal lose its place in the literature of the world. The paraphrase in which our own poet set its pictures before the eyes of London in his generation has taught us to call it, "The Vanity of Human Wishes:" but its main thought, its avowed impulse, lies deeper than these words can point: and its truer title would be "The Vanity of Human Prayers."

"Evertère domos totas optantibus ipsis
Di faciles : nocitura togâ, nocitura petuntur
Mitiâ." ¹

Here, as in many other passages, the Roman Satirist is an unconscious witness to the Apostle of Christ: here, as elsewhere, the heathen sets to his seal that God is true. If for another instance we turn to the fearful, unqualified words at the close of the first chapter of this Epistle, to the description of the moral ruin of those who kept down, who imprisoned the truth in iniquity, and who, because they would not retain God in their knowledge, were given over to vile affections and to a

¹ *Juvenal, Sat. x. 7-9.*

reprobate mind; it might almost seem as though the enthusiasm of the preacher of the world's redemption had led him to paint its need in colours darker, and shadows less relieved than those of the actual life. We seem to see the Apostle, before whom the ever-present revelation of Jesus Christ had opened the height of Heaven, and displayed the ideal of the Divine purity, confronted and staggered by the prevalent degradation of that human nature, in which his Lord was living for evermore at God's Right Hand. As he travels from city to city, from one centre of culture and luxury to another, it seems to him that he is passing through a world which God has forsaken, as though a rejected Lord had in His righteous anger left men to drift from sin to sin, from shame to shame, from misery to misery, and from gloom to gloom. And so there breaks forth from his lips that stern denunciation of the moral aspect of wilful godlessness: with sustained relentlessness he shows the helpless ruin of those in whom the action and reaction of an abused intellect and a distorted morality are checked by no Divine interposition, no upward aspiration: and as verse after verse deepens the horror of the record, we wonder whether this can be indeed a just estimate of the pagan character in its last development. We cannot wonder when we turn to Juvenal and find St. Paul's indictment re-affirmed

with an intensity, which seems like the very echo of the revelation of the wrath of God. There is not a crime in all that dreary list to which the city, by the voice of its own poet, does not plead guilty: and it is the very same corruption of society which wearies the satirist of the sinful city, and makes the apostle of repentance and forgiveness cry, "I must see Rome."¹

Not less striking, surely, is the witness of the tenth satire to the practical truth of the text: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought:" not less suggestive is the contrast between Juvenal's safeguard and St. Paul's. The chief thought of the poem was doubtless already a commonplace of literature: it was vividly expressed in the Second Alcibiades,² then held without question to be Socratic: Rome had heard it not long before from Persius:³ and Seneca had ranked the unwisdom of intercessory prayer among the most ruinous disturbances of life: "Quam inimica nobis sunt vota nostrorum: inter execrationes parentum crevimus."⁴ But the power and earnestness of Juvenal gave to the commonplace a freshness which it has never lost. One by one the highest objects of unaided human aspiration are set before us: and one by one they receive the

¹ Cf. Acts xix. 21; Juv. *Sat.* iii.

² Cf. (Plato) *Alcibiades*, II., Capp. i. iv. v.

³ In the second Satire, esp. lines 5-23.

⁴ Seneca, *Ep.* LX. *ad init.* Cf. also *Ep.* x.

stamp of disastrous failure. Wealth and power, eloquence and glory, conquest and length of days and personal beauty:—it was for these that men sought the shrines of all the strange gods which the credulity of despair had welcomed at Rome: and every day a fresh curse broke out from these fancied blessings: in ceaseless irony the gods seemed to answer the petitions of those who knew not what they should pray for as they ought, and whose very prayers were turned into sin.

“*Nil ergo optabant homines*”?—The satirist answers this question by narrowing the range of prayer to limits within which it cannot do much harm. Even thus restricted he seems to think that it ought to be regarded as a concession to the weakness of those who cannot rest in motionless submission to the will of the gods. Mere acquiescence would be the more excellent way: but if men must pray for something, let it be for the safest, simplest favours, and in the most general terms:

“*Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano.*

Fortem posce animum, mortis terrore carentem.”¹

With this caution the dangerous efficacy of prayer may be harmlessly exercised.

Through avenues of thought widely diverse from these, and with very different practical issues, St. Paul comes to the same truth—“We know not what we

¹ *Juv. Sat. x. 356, 357.*

should pray for as we ought." That which Juvenal sees, so to speak, from below, through the darkness of human folly, and error, and sin, the Apostle of the Incarnation sees from above, in the light of the glory to which Christ has raised our nature. The thought of the redemption whereby the Son of God, fulfilling as our Saviour the law which otherwise He must as our Judge have enforced, has made us free for the service of God:—this thought has raised St. Paul's eyes to that ultimate consequence and perfect realization of the Divine Purpose towards which in Christ we move. Already the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: already there is One within us Whose Presence lifts us above the relationships of earth; already the Everlasting Arms are under us; already our faith may lay hold upon the assurance of a Father's love, and rejoice in the dependence of a childlike trust:—yet is this but the beginning—it doth not yet appear what we shall be. For if we be children, then are we heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." On this consummation, on this incomparable glory which shall be revealed in us, the Apostle's gaze is now fixed: and from this there streams back a light which changes the whole aspect of the present life. For he sees in this

perfect emancipation, this final glory of the sons of God, the object of the earnest longing of all creation: towards this achievement the world is pressing and striving, through all its costly discipline of pain and death: this will explain the great mystery of suffering, and justify all that now seems wasteful and fruitless in the present world: God's creation will understand the meaning of its reluctant subjection to failure when out of the house of Egypt and bondage of corruption it passes into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It will then remember no more the groaning of its travail, for joy that from a new Heaven and a new earth there mounts to God the unhindered praise of His redeemed. Thus does the struggle for existence appear in the light of its predestined issue: thus does the revelation of the end illuminate the means. Nor is this all:—on us too, on our life, on our struggles, on our sorrows the brightness falls. For we too are in travail with an imprisoned life: we too must look to the future for the explanation of the present. "Even we ourselves, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The higher life is astir within us: it troubles the ease with which, we think, we might have rested on the lower level: we cannot fully enter into the joy of our Lord, yet we have tasted and

seen enough to spoil for ever the pleasures of sin. Nay more—much more than this: we know, we cannot forget that our fellowship is with the Saints, that our life is hid with Christ in God, that our conversation is in Heaven: and the earnest of the Spirit will not let us rest in any scheme or theory of life which excludes or ignores the invisible and the imponderable. When we are truest to ourselves we are most sure of this: when our life is most intense it witnesses most clearly to its own incompleteness. How then shall we order or direct the course whose end we cannot see? What shall we choose in a world whereof so little is yet revealed? Whither shall we aspire, when the clouds hang so low in the heavens? What shall we long for, when we see nothing which can satisfy us? “We know not what we should pray for as we ought.”

We know not,—for we cannot choose as though this world were all,—we know not, for it doth not yet appear what we shall be.—Not from the blunders of men, but from the inconceivable height of their destiny does the Apostle learn how hard it is to pray aright: and his solution of the difficulty is proportionally different. There is a grace which takes the place of knowledge, and brings the will and the aspirations of men into a mysterious harmony with the unseen: a grace which lifts the desires of the human heart above

all that this fragment of the universe can offer, and orders its impulses according to a truly universal law; a grace which leads us on when knowledge falters, and will lead when knowledge shall vanish away: a grace which is His gift alone Whose advent we commemorate to-day: that grace which in the redeemed of Christ rests upon experience, and maketh not ashamed—the grace of hope.

By hope we were saved: and prayer is the voice of hope. That same most Holy Spirit Whose presence disturbs the completeness of this life by the revelation and earnest of eternity, is ever ready and longing to guide the vague craving of our hearts towards His home and ours. Prisoners we must be, for a while: but by His help we may be prisoners of hope. He, Who comes from the very heart of Heaven, He Who brings that flush and warmth of Divine joy which can make even the summer of this world seem faint and poor, He can take our restless, bewildered hearts back along the path which He has traversed, to His throne, Who made us for Himself, in Whom alone we can rest. Not by timid hints of prudent caution, but by the unflinching impulse of an insatiable hope does He teach us what we should pray for as we ought. Then only are we in true accord with the world around us, when we, like it, are pressing towards an unseen end, chafing

in hope under the bondage of corruption, judging the present and the visible in the light of the glory which shall be revealed. Then only are we living with the whole energy of our manhood when we rise in obedience to the hope that is in us, and trust the guidance of our prayers to the mind of the Spirit. There is a melody in our life, but we shall never catch its rhythm, or enter into its subtle harmonies, till we learn to listen for those higher notes which are the complement of its imperfection, the resolution of its discords.

If amid the mysteries of Pentecost we turn for a moment to the thoughts of earlier days, it can only be that we may learn how the great gift of God has purified, enlightened, raised, and satisfied the want of which in every age humanity was conscious. In that which is perhaps the most marvellous and pregnant legend of all mythology, Prometheus, as he hangs in torture on the rock, looks back in triumph to two chief gifts whereby he had alleviated the misery of men :

τυφλὰς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐλπίδας κατώκισα.

And again,

πρὸς τοῖσδε μέντοι πῦρ ἐγὼ σφιν ὄπασα.¹

By the gift of hope he had blinded men's eyes to that crushing certainty of quick-coming death which else would have paralysed every energy of life : by the gift

¹ Æsch. *Prometheus Vincetus*, 258, 260.

of fire he had given them the mastery over all those arts whereby our race is protected, comforted, and civilized. Of the latter gift we may only say with reverence that God has chosen fire to be in all ages of His Church the outward and visible sign of the Divine light and warmth whereby men truly live, being raised above the mist and cold of the self-taught, self-centred heart. The bush that burnt with fire, the flame that lit the sacrifice: the chariot wherein one prophet mounted to Heaven, and the live coal which cleansed the lips of another: the answer which came to Elijah by fire, and the fire-like creatures whom Ezekiel saw by the banks of Chebar: all these were forecast flashes from that perfect gift which we commemorate to-day.—But what a change has come over the meaning and the range of that other boon which the heathen ascribed to the pity of Prometheus: that gift of hope which could only make it possible for man to live by blinding his eyes to the doom of death. We too have received the gift of hope: for us too it is the “*modus vivendi*”; from us too it takes away the bitterness of death. But our hope changes the aspect of the world not by blindness but by the everlasting stream of the divine light: the life which it renders possible is the life eternal in the heavens: nor need it hide the day of death, when death itself is swallowed up in victory.

Therefore, brethren, let us ever glorify Him Who as on this day came to help our infirmities by raising our weary and uncertain desires to the only source and end of hope. And let us pray Him never to leave us: never to let us rest: but evermore to point our gaze and guide our prayers towards the glory of our unseen goal. May He help us to pray for the world: that through all its changes and losses and strife it may be brought to the attainment of its earnest expectation, the fulfilment of His purpose Who created it in love: for our University, that it may not falter in loyalty to Him Who is its Light, Who longs to be its salvation: for the Church, that when all hope is fulfilled by the glorious appearing of her Saviour Christ, she may be arrayed in the righteousness of Saints, and the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And lastly, let us watch and strive and pray for ourselves, that no deceitfulness of sin, no violence of disappointment, no weariness of failure, no dulness of mediocrity may break the courage which God gives us, or drag down to earth the effort which His Holy Spirit stirs and guides. In proportion to the saving power of hope are the forces which assail it. Every year we live, the grasp of custom grows firmer upon us, and we find it harder to move with freedom among the thickening hindrances of social life: every year we are tempted afresh to take the ordinary

expectation of our fellow-men as the guide of our aspirations, and to think that we may wisely rest when we have found a pleasant background for a life not painfully laborious. There is no one in whom the grace of hope is not beset by the easy hopelessness of self-satisfaction. But to some there come fiercer trials than these: the open invitation of sin which is common enough to call itself general: the sickening misery of repeated penitence which has never been perfected by purity: the lying whispers of temptation which say that men will be men, hint that they may be brutes, and forget that they have been saints:—these are antagonists of hope from which only the strength of the Holy Ghost can rescue our hindered souls. He can, He will so rescue and sustain all who seek His Presence and listen for His Voice: and none can utterly faint who look for the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living: for if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Be this, then, our Whitsuntide prayer, that the God of hope may fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

VI.

THE RECORDS OF THE PAST.¹

“ Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

PHIL. I. 6.

IN writing thus St. Paul lifts his thoughts about the issue of his work at Philippi to the only level on which confidence about the distant future can be either reverent or rational. The prisoner of Jesus Christ, in the comparative leisure which his bonds enforce, with love and thankfulness looks forward to the further growth, the final glory of those souls whom he, even he, has been allowed to win for God: and his mind in its brave forecast humbly rests upon the only ground, the only element of certainty in man's uncertain life. He does not dwell upon the numerical increase of the Philippian converts, or even upon their regularity in religious duties: he is not here relying upon that sub-

¹ Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, by appointment of his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, at the Consecration of the Lord Bishop of Ely and the Lord Bishop of Japan, 1886.

stantial token of their sincerity which he himself had experienced "as concerning giving and receiving": and still less is his confidence based on any strong expressions of subjective assurance in particular disciples of which Epaphroditus might have told him. No;—as he speaks of confidence he looks right away from all these things:—away from all that can be touched with the precariousness of human moods and motives and opinions:—up to that one steadfast and unswerving force which has wrought thus far the work of grace: he is only confident that that force will not fail or flag: confident that He which hath begun a good work in His servants at Philippi will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. That patient, persistent, undiscouraged power of the Love of God will not lightly leave its purpose or give up the souls it once has touched: the Everlasting God, the Lord, fainteth not, neither is weary: through all our wayward, fickle, disappointing changes, He abideth faithful. He ever presses on with the constancy of His eternal Love the work He has begun. God hath showed His Voice: and "the Voice of the Lord is mighty in operation." God has put His Hand to the work: and St. Paul is confident that He will perform it,—even until the day of Jesus Christ. Yes—his anticipation of the course and progress of that sanctifying work springs unchecked beyond

the barrier of death. It has been well remarked,¹ that to the Apostolic Church the belief in the Second Advent was what the expectation of death commonly is to most men. Their view of the soul's career and history did not halt or falter at its departure from the body : their gaze was fixed on a more distant and more luminous horizon : even on the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And on and on until that day, God will perform—St. Paul is confident of it—the work which He has begun : whatever mysteries of growth or preparation there may be within that unseen world, that cloister of the Church Expectant, God will not forsake the souls He has redeemed and sanctified and made His own in this world. Though they go down to Hades, He is there also : even there also shall His Hand lead them, and His Right Hand shall hold them : for He will not leave them until He have done that which He hath spoken to them of : until He have performed the work which He, with Whom is no variable-ness, hath begun in them.

This then is the ground and nature of St. Paul's confidence in regard to the future of the Christian community at Philippi. It is no easy optimism, no indolent

¹ Cf. Jowett on St. Paul's Epistles, vol. i. p. 103, and Rev. ii. 25, with Archbishop Trench's note : *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches*, p. 146.

or indifferent readiness to be soon satisfied that things are going on well : for neither natural disposition nor past experience would incline St. Paul to that sort of hopefulness. It is a sober and religious conviction that the stirring of hearts and wills among the Philippians, the answer of faith and love which has greeted the Gospel of Christ, the gathering in of converts to the means of grace, is indeed the beginning of a Divine work, the emergence and development of a Divine plan : and that therefore it will not be lightly abandoned or allowed to come to nothing. God does not take up a work and carry it forward and enlist in it the hearts and hopes of His servants, and then let it all drop and fall back in discouraging, abortive failure, in the enfeebled misery of a baffled venture : No—men may indeed divert the course of His grace—their puny stubbornness may here and there force the strong tide of His redeeming Love to seek another channel and to flow through other fields :—but He does not abandon His purpose or His work : He does not arbitrarily throw over what He has once begun : and a man can find no surer ground of practical confidence, no truer indication of that which will endure and triumph, no better warrant for the dedication of his life, than the discernment and the recognition where Almighty God is working.

“ Confident of this very thing, that He Which hath

begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Surely as St. Paul wrote thus, as he thus ventured to bring his realization of God's unwearied Love down among all the changes and chances of this world, and let it make him speak with confidence even about the course of human history, his venture must have been encouraged by one actual confirmation of the *à priori* argument. He had one great historical instance to commend his theological inference. For he knew, with all the depth and intensity of a late and reluctant realization, that the whole history of his own people had been one vast illustration of the truth on which he relied. In them, far back, in the very childhood of the race, God had begun a good work: patriarchs, psalmists, prophets had by faith been confident that He would perform it: and He had actually performed it until the day of Jesus Christ, until His first coming. From the call of Abraham to the Incarnation one purpose had been steadfast, one work had moved on a line determined from the beginning:—all that vast period, with its surprises and disasters, its restless shiftings, its immeasurable contrasts, had been spanned by one dominant conception:—through all that seemed so disorderly and aimless there had sped the evolution of one supreme design:—from first to last one thought

held good, one will pressed on :—and He Who came at last could look back across the centuries to that majestic, solitary form upon the far-distant watch-tower, and could declare—“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day : and he saw it and was glad.” We think, and rightly think, of the Incarnation of our Blessed Lord as the beginning of a new life and hope for all mankind : the years since He came are numbered from His Birth as from a new creation of the world : but we must not forget that His advent had also the aspect of an end : that it closed a completed volume in the history of God’s Self-revealing :—and that as His Virgin Mother foresaw the ages that should be, and sang—“Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed” :—so Simeon, just and devout, gazed back over the long centuries of upward-toiling faith, and prayed to God in the quiet gladness of the evening light :—“Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word.” The Birth and Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord had crowned the Divine work which God had begun when He called the Father of the Faithful ; that issue had justified the astonishing confidence of those who all along “endured as seeing Him Who is invisible,” and died in faith, persuaded of His promises : it had shown by one supreme decisive instance who had been right and who had been wrong

in the days when it was hardest to be confident : and it stood as the great experimental evidence that through all delays and hindrances and disappointments God could, God would perform the good work which He had begun. For in that day it could be said in the joy of hope made good : “ Lo, this is our God : we have waited for Him and He will save us : this is the Lord ; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

That ancient hope of patriarchs and prophets has passed on, we know, chastened, heightened, illuminated, and assured, to be the strength of the Catholic Church of Christ. It halted not, it found no rest, when Messiah came : it was caught up at once to a higher level and a purer light : and the Son of God Himself has made it certain. By His own sure word we know now that whatever else may stand or fall, the ministry of His mercy shall not cease :—the gates of Hell shall not prevail against His Church :—

“ Si fractus illabatur orbis
Impavidam ferient ruinae.”

It is an axiom of Christianity, drawn from His own express announcement, that for all time His truth shall be taught, His grace conveyed, to the souls He died to win. “ Heaven and earth,” He said, “ shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.” “ Even unto the

end of the world " He will be with His servants as they baptize and teach : and in the Eucharistic Mystery they shall continually show the Lord's Death " till He come." While this world lasts the channels of His renewing grace shall never be cut off from it : on till the very day of His coming the stewards of His mysteries shall prepare and make ready His way : though the earth be moved, though the tempests shake the mountains—still "there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High." This we know:—but surely St. Paul's words of confidence about the Philippian Church will warrant our going one step further. If he was taught to speak confidently as to God's purpose for that one branch of the universal Church, only some ten years after its beginning: surely we too may venture—bear with me, brethren, if I seem to say too much—we too may venture, with all lowliness and wonder—with utter self-reproach and self-distrust—to allow, and to recognize in our own hearts, something approaching a like confidence about that good work which God has begun, which God has guarded and carried forward through centuries of such tremendous perils, in this Church of England. Doubtless, as we thus narrow in our forecast—as we begin to think not of the whole Church Catholic but only of our own Communion, not of God's whole redemptive

work but only of that which He foresees for England, the note of certainty must pass out of our words: we cannot say we know. Our Saviour's promise is to His universal Church: and God is pledged for certainty to nothing narrower than that. But something less than certainty may well have a real bearing upon our thoughts, our words, our feelings, our policy in regard to the Church of our own land:—and as, with St. Paul's words in our minds, we look back over the ecclesiastical history of England, though we may not, ignorant and shortsighted as we are, rise to a confidence like his, still surely we may gather a real substance of encouragement, a deep rebuke for all faint-heartedness, and a clear challenge to a nobler love, a braver and more trustful hope. For as we mark the astounding instances of deliverance and renewal which meet us again and again in the history of our Church, may we not, must we not, here also trace with trembling hope the course of a Divine work, the emergence and development of a Divine plan? It is a history of perils such as no other Church has known: and it has resulted in an unique position. Again and again things have been so dark or so bad that it has seemed impossible for the Church to escape without a deadly wound: again and again the shout of the children of Edom has rung round the tottering, neglected walls, and those within have

seemed utterly forgetful and careless of their charge. As we realize the vital risks or the disgraceful disorders of one stage after another in the momentous course: as we see how narrowly and with how inadequate a sense of her own danger the Church escaped from some irreparable loss, some fatal breach with her Apostolic tradition;—we surely may believe that there must yet be some further, vaster work than any we have touched which is marked with her name, for which she has been preserved by the Providence and Love of God. If we try, taking but one instance, to enter with any activity of historic imagination into the state of things during the first thirty years of the reign of Elizabeth, we may discern something of the superhuman Power which was caring for the Church of England. The people were almost mad—and we can hardly wonder at it—almost mad with a panic hatred of Rome:—so that all was judged to be reform if it was but a step further from the ancient worship and belief.¹ All round the Church sects were growing up, strange and reckless sometimes in their vehemence, malignant, intolerant, ambitious. Meanwhile a large and active and resolute body among the clergy themselves, with much power of eloquence on their side, much real earnestness and zeal for souls, much of true principle sincerely

¹ Cf. Hooker, *Eccles. Pol.* iv. iii. 1, 2.

trusted, and much influence in high places among a greedy and unscrupulous nobility, were ceaselessly agitating for the destruction of Episcopacy and the subjection of the English Church to the Presbyterian discipline: while over all there loomed the unfailing, oppressive, commanding European authority of the strongest Pope in all the history of error, John Calvin of Geneva. And, in such a time, of the clergy of the Church of England, not a third was licensed to preach: many were neglecting with perfect impartiality the duties of four or five parishes at once: few had anything that could be called education: and in one diocese alone four hundred benefices were vacant.¹ And even those who had learning and courage to stand forward in defence of the Episcopate did not venture, until Bancroft's famous sermon, preached near this place, just six months after the destruction of the Armada, to uphold that order on the true, the one sufficient ground. While such a force of principle and enthusiasm was pressing on to the assault of Episcopacy, it was upheld by Jewel and Whitgift not in the strength of its exclusive claim: not as essential to the continuity of the Priesthood and the validity of the Holy Eucharist:

¹ Cf. the statements quoted from official documents by Mr. Perry in *The Student's English Church History*, p. 277; and Hooker, *Ecl. Pol.* v. lxxxix. *ad init.*

but simply as an allowable form of government rendered authoritative by the appointment of the State: a view impoverishing the whole conception of the threefold Ministry, and quenching all the ardour and devotion with which Episcopacy should have been defended if men had seen it as indeed an integral part of that Divinely-ordered scheme whereby we receive the means of grace.¹ And may we not, as we watch the Church, so fiercely shaken, so inadequately upheld, emerging at last out of all that storm of peril and bewilderment, emerging without harm or loss at any single point essential to her Catholicity, feel sure that it was indeed no human power, no human policy, which guided and protected her: that she was reserved and tended only by the Hand of God? And so did He deliver her again and again: yea, many a time turned He His wrath away and would not suffer His whole displeasure to arise. For as we come much nearer to our own days, we are appalled sometimes at the stories of greed and worldliness among the Clergy, of slovenly irreverence and gross neglect and even utter profligacy, which we find not far back in the annals of a parish—we wonder how there is any loyalty to the Church left in the hearts of these long-neglected poor, any religion in the rich who saw its ministers and its service so

¹ Cf. Mr. Keble's Preface to Hooker's Works, pp. lix. *seq.*

degraded:—we tremble as we think of that vast long-suffering of God which lets us still be here with all our powers, all our blessings, all our wealth of light and grace, blessed be His Name! unforfeited by all our sins. Yes, we well may wonder;—as we think of our shameful failures in the past, our faults and flaws and miserable divisions in the present:—can it be that we, even we, indeed are charged with the tremendous distinction of a heritage combining elements of strength which are combined in no other community on earth? Can it be that the Church which has so many sources of weakness and discredit—so much that asks for forbearance and patience:—the Church that is assailed with such persistence and determination from without,—that is enfeebled within by such blind and hard indifference to her prerogative glory of faith and Sacraments,—is all the while allowed to bear the treasure of a hope hardly to be found in any other branch of the Church Catholic? Yes, it has indeed been said by a great French writer,¹ in often quoted words, that if ever Christendom is reunited, it seems as though the movement must issue from the Church of England: and soon after the beginning of this century, a dispassionate and observant writer, Alexander Knox, could say in a letter showing a

¹ De Maistre. *Considérations sur la France*, ch. ii., quoted by Mr. Curteis in his *Bampton Lectures*, p. 33.

very remarkable foresight of events which then seemed most unlikely :—

“No Church on earth has more intrinsic excellence than the Church of England, yet no Church probably has less practical influence. Her excellence then, I conceive, gives ground for confiding that Providence never will abandon her; but her want of influence would seem no less clearly to indicate, that Divine wisdom will not always suffer her to go on without measures for her improvement. My persuasion of the radical excellence of the Church of England does not suffer me to doubt that she is to be an illustrious agent in bringing the Mystical Kingdom of Christ to its ultimate perfection.”¹ And surely such hopes are not altogether groundless. We escaped out of the sixteenth century untouched by the losses which have marred the heritage of the Protestant communities abroad: and we have been spared from the accretions which have deformed the doctrine and the practice of Rome:—with Orders derived in a continuous tradition from the gift of Pentecost; with the self-same Sacraments which upheld the Martyrs, illumined the Doctors, perfected the Saints in days of old; with daily offices surpassing in dignity and antiquity all that the laity are allowed to share in any other portion of the Western Church;

¹ *Remains of Alexander Knox*, vol. i. pp. 56, 68.

we have also a tradition of doctrine which we can bring without fear or apology or reserve to be tried by the great canon of the Catholic Faith : " Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus." There is nothing surely to hinder us from once again laying fresh hold upon the life, the affection of the great English people. There must come indeed to every thoughtful mind a sense of awe, a thrill of penitence and shame, as we try to realize in their full wonder the deliverances of the past, the privileges of the present, the possibilities and opportunities of development in the future : we must tremble as we realize the unequalled trust that rests upon us, weak, discordant, threatened as we are : but we dare not refuse to recognize the power that has wrought for us, or forget the days when He delivered us out of the hand of the enemy : we dare not in false ungrateful modesty pretend to think little of the wealth, the hope, which, by no sort of merit upon our part, have been preserved to us : we dare not utterly disclaim all confidence that He Which hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

I may not dwell on the practical uses of such a confidence as I have dared to suggest. They are obvious and manifold : and I must not presume upon your patience. But one great lesson seems to rush upon our

minds as we think of these things. If God has done all this for us—if He still suffers us to be where and what we are: then how instant and tremendous is the urgency for self-scrutiny, self-discipline, and self-sacrifice in work:—work at home ever wider, deeper, higher: work abroad ever braver in its loving ambition for the Kingdom of the Crucified. Who knows but that our day of grace may be even now prolonged, our trust continued, our strength renewed just for the sake of some distant and unnoticed bit of Mission work? Yes, it may well be that while our thought and anxiety are wholly engrossed by the course of political events at home, while we are watching the currents of public opinion in England, and imagining that everything depends on the issue of an election or the balance of parties: in reality the true crisis of the Church is turning on her faithfulness to some distant task: in the eyes of God, it may be, her future is being determined in some far-off mission-field: and one of those, perhaps, who are sent forth to-day to their Apostolic trust may by his courage, his prayers, his love and zeal for souls, uphold the ancient Church of England in whose name he ventures forth and toils for God.—Yes, for even the avenging Angels of the Apocalypse are bidden hold their hands from their tremendous errand, till the servants of God, the humble and unheeded,

watched by Him alone, have received His Seal upon their foreheads.

The very wealth of our inheritance, the very wonder of our history, the very ground of our confidence, constitute our strongest obligation to unceasing diligence, and to resolute discontent with all that we have yet achieved. But they bind us also to a thankful and enthusiastic loyalty towards the Church of our baptism: a loyalty that will make us reverent and patient and submissive: a loyalty that glows with a true fire of filial love: sensitive to every breath of dishonour, and chivalrously faithful, as to a most dear and noble mother of us all. So too may there grow in us a temper that has surely seldom been more needed than in our day: the temper of a quiet and hopeful courage; not driven into panics, not fretful under assaults, not over-ready to think that a crisis is unparalleled, or hurriedly to meet it with any half-considered offers of self-adaptation and irrevocable experiments in reconstruction: while we bear ourselves rather as those who have received through centuries of trial and very many crises a trust too vast and beautiful for us to trifle with—a trust which will certainly disclose, in recompence for those who guard it faithfully, unsuspected and inexhaustible resources of power and endurance in all times of trouble. The judgment of calm and thoughtful minds assures us that

such times are coming for us: times at the thought of which the natural shrinking of any man who knows himself, as he draws near to the highest order in the Church, must receive fresh pain and awe, from the sense that he may have to stand at the helm through very stormy weather; that there is that ahead which will try the strength of the strongest, and the courage of the most collected and clear-sighted. In October last it pleased Almighty God to call away from all anxiety and conflict one upon whose heart He had impressed with rare distinctness the great principles of a steadfast course. Bishop Woodford, it has been said with perfect truth, "had embraced in all its depth and greatness the idea of the Christian Church as the embodiment and instrument of God's purposes for mankind." "He was convinced that only on the ancient and unbroken faith, as to the offices and gifts of the Church, could revealed religion hope to maintain itself amid the strife of tongues."¹ And therefore, with singular modesty and singular gentleness, with patient justice, and generous sympathy, "as a Churchman, he was uncompromising." God, Who loved and taught and sanctified him, has called him into rest. And to-day the trust he bore is placed in the hands of his successor: in whose friend-

¹ Cf. a most just and beautiful account of the late Bishop of Ely in the *Guardian* immediately after his death.

ship I have learnt how simply distasteful and distressing it would be to him if I were to venture now to speak of the ample grounds for all high and thankful hopes concerning his Episcopate. Only, then, so far I presume upon the privilege by which I stand here as to dare, in conclusion, to remind him, and you, my Lords, to whose dignity he is to-day advanced, that the anxiety and strain which the Bishops of the Church of England are called to bear need not be borne without ennobling memories and quickening hopes and an uplifting power of sympathy and prayer. Surely there is not little help in recalling the perils and preservations of the past: in realizing through how marvellous a history the Church you rule has been safely brought: in seeing what it is that really stands the test of time. And while you lead and guide us in the defence of our Apostolic heritage there will ever rise and glow around you,—be sure of it, my Lords—the reverent affection, the filial and grateful loyalty, the prayer and thanksgiving of those who will feel, perhaps, with a new devotion in the day of common trial, the meaning of that Fatherhood to which you have been consecrated. Ay—and yet again—far on, when we all have passed away from the scene of our probation, when the din of popularity and of slander is no more to us than the gust of a bygone gale, then may generation after generation bless Almighty

God for the courage He vouchsafed to you, and keep your memory in love and honour, for the Church, the Faith, the Sacraments, which you guarded for them through the storm. But incomparably greater, surer, more sustaining than all else is that vision which rises up for you beyond the most distant tracts of time : the vision of that "day of Jesus Christ" on which the Apostle's gaze was fixed : when He, Who laid down His Life for the sheep, shall welcome you as faithful servants, and true shepherds of His flock : and as He bids you enter into His Joy, for His own good work begun and perfected in you shall crown you with that crown of glory that fadeth not away.

VII.

THE FORCE OF FAITH.

“The Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea ; and it should obey you.”

ST. LUKE XVII. 6.

I NEED hardly say that in trying to learn the lesson hidden for us in these words, we must utterly clear them of a false and unworthy meaning which perhaps our thoughtlessness may have somehow connected with them. We must not imagine that they give any encouragement to an idle and childish expectation of any startling and ostentatious outcome of a true faith in Jesus Christ : as though God’s grace could ever be used to win for any one the wonder or admiration of his fellow-men, or displayed in any abrupt and fruitless miracle, for our excitement or aggrandizement. If there be any form of faith, any supernatural power, with which such things as these have ever been connected, certainly it has not been the faith or the power of Him Who stands before us in the Gospel: the

Author of order and system in the world of nature, the Pattern of humility and obedience in the world of grace. It is a far higher and nobler power which is really promised by our Lord even to the least measure of true faith in Him : a power which is far more fruitful and more mysterious than the mere working of a wonder which would only be like a conjuring trick on a large scale. For what He really here teaches us, as though in a short and vivid parable, is this : that since His coming upon earth, there is a new kind of force astir in the history and in the souls of men :—a force which in the speed and certainty of its action can surpass all the ordinary means by which men scheme and work : a force which is effective far beyond all likelihood that we can see in it, so that even its least germ is able to achieve results of inconceivable difficulty and greatness :—and for the secret, the character, of this new force He points us to the one spring and motive of the Christian life—to faith.

Now, before we leave the outward form in which this truth is taught us, let us notice one point in it : that it is to a seed that our Lord compares the beginning of faith in a man's heart : to a grain of mustard seed : which indeed is the least of all seeds : but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh

a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. He seems thus to teach us that all true faith is ever and everywhere growing:—from the first beginning, its very life is by expansion, growth, and increase: it is not a dead self-contained thing, but a seed, filled with an almost infinite power of growth in strength and range and beauty: however poor and mean and worthless it may seem, there is that in it which will in due time and with due care force its way into the light, and strive towards Heaven itself; till the little speck of hope becomes a branching, fruitful wealth of life and beauty, a resting-place and shelter for those who hover round its boughs and find refreshment and protection in its gentle strength. Faith, then, is not a state of inactive security: it is a constant progress towards a fuller, nobler life:—and the little grain which seems hardly worth caring for or keeping, is of infinite value as the earnest and power of a growth beyond all hope.

In the trust that we may more clearly understand what is here promised to the exercise of faith, I would ask you to consider whether in history, or in what we call the ordinary life of men, we can find anything that is analogous and akin to the strength and efficacy of which our Saviour speaks.¹ Do we, I mean, ever meet with any character which does thus seem to escape from

¹ Cf. S. Cyril. *Catech.* v. §§ γ', δ'. (Ed. Bened. p. 73.)

the ordinary restrictions of cause and effect : to exert a force far beyond all the likelihood that we can discover : and to achieve results which sober and practical men would never have expected from it? Is there any temper of mind and will which makes a way through insuperable obstacles, and forces mountainous difficulties to yield it service and obedience?

Well, in the first place, do we not see a strange foreshadowing of such supernatural effectiveness, and a wonderful contrast between what might reasonably have been looked for and what is actually achieved, in the life and work of men who have a large degree of faith in themselves? Do we not see in what we know of history and politics, and in our own experience too, that the men who do great deeds, who leave a mark behind them, who bend stubborn circumstances to their will, who influence other men (bearing into their hearts the passions or the policy which they have themselves conceived), are always the men who have a firm faith in their own judgment, and a resolute conviction that they will achieve what they have set themselves to do: so that they are not always explaining and apologizing and qualifying and standing on the defensive, but rather going straight forward and fearlessly calling upon others to follow them? We may have seen, perhaps, in the great world, the almost irresistible power

of those who have this faith in themselves: who never doubt that they are aiming at the one right aim. And in the narrower world of our home or private life, we may know how easily we accept the advice, or even welcome and rest and delight in the control of one who is not afraid to bear the responsibility of a positive decision, who can venture largely by faith in himself. —And yet this faith in one's self lies perilously near to some of the most hindering and ruinous defects of character: to conceit, to presumption, to obstinacy, to neglect of other men's thoughts and feelings, to loss of sensitiveness and gentleness and delicacy, to a deficient sense of humour: all these are close about it, threatening to assimilate it to themselves, or to mix themselves with it:—but, nevertheless, a man who believes in himself will attain results and conquer difficulties far beyond the power and scope of characters in which we should have seen much more promise of effectiveness. He will, to take the very lowest estimate of his life, be outwardly successful: he will do what he wishes and intends to do: he will make other people believe in him and work for him: difficulties will disappear because he will not see them, and distant ends will come within his reach because he never doubts that they are so.—But more than this, and by a higher estimate, his faith in himself will give him a strange

power and energy for work : he will set himself great tasks and bear great labour and privation, if this is—as probably in some form it will be—necessary : for he will feel that his life is a great thing to be ordered and lived on a large scale, with aims that are worth all the more self-denial because he is sure that he will attain them.—But far above all, if he is a good man, he will resolutely put away all mean and little ways of self-indulgence, he will not be always rewarding himself for everything he does ; he will be truthful and outspoken, since falsehood and dissimulation are the refuge of men who are uncertain or ashamed of themselves : and he will lift his life and thoughts above all that may degrade or hinder or enfeeble him. Even a little faith in himself can wonderfully raise and strengthen a man : even as there is no more hopeless temper than to have mean or base or grumbling thoughts about that which God has made us and given us.

But, secondly, there is a nearer reflection of that which the text means, and a higher and more mysterious efficacy, in the power which some can wield by faith in their fellow-men. I trust we all know something of the strange influence by which some men seem able to discover and draw out and strengthen all that is good and hopeful in those with whom they have to do. The change which is wrought by one who meets his fellows

with a simple, earnest trust and hope is just the contrary of that miserable atmosphere of dingy mist and cold in which a cynic lives and thinks and acts : distrusting and depreciating others till they cease to show him anything but those meaner, harsher elements in their character which he seems resolute and glad to find.—There can hardly be a happier or more fruitful and wonder-working life than his in whose company men are always stirred to brightness and unselfishness just because he always believes that they are purer and better than they are : by whose trustful expectation they are reminded of what they once desired and hoped to be, so that the long-forgotten ideal seems again to come within their reach, and they live, if only for a while, by a light which they never thought to see again. For thus this quickening and enlightening power of faith in our fellow-men changes the whole air and aspect of a life : and he who is thus trustful and hopeful draws out in one man the timid and hidden germ of good, and engenders in another the grace and warmth which his faith presumes :—and the dullest heart is startled into sympathy with the charity which believeth all things, and hopeth all things : so that everywhere this faith is greeted by the brightness which itself calls out, as the sun is welcomed by the glad colours which sleep until he comes.—And

yet, if we look critically at this faith in one's fellow-men, it too is parted by a narrow and uncertain line from much that is merely weak and poor and faulty :—from credulity, from insensibility, from indifference and shallowness and the ready acceptance of a low standard of life and thought. It is hard at times to shelter such a faith from all these perils : and yet, though they are all about it, still it does move among us with a strange and magical power of bringing light and tenderness into the unlikeliest hearts, of entering through fast-closed doors, and waking hopes of purity that seemed for ever dead and cold, and winning men from mean and foul and selfish ways to bear their part of loving service towards making this world better than it was.

Such then is the effective force of faith in one's-self, and in one's fellow-men : such are the wonders which they enable us to work. By the former a man may increase beyond all conceivable likelihood the range and energy of his personal influence and will : by the latter he can kindle love and hope in almost every heart he meets. The former carries a man as though by a miraculous force to the achievement of his own work : the latter fills his life with grace and strength to work the work of God. Can we wonder, then, (since this is so, since we can see and feel that it is so), if to

the highest faith of all, the faith which rises above this world and climbs even to the Throne of God, our Saviour promises a power and efficiency beyond the reach of human skill and the constraint of natural laws? If men have changed the world by trusting themselves, and changed a thousand hearts by trusting men, surely they may do at least as much by trusting God. For here is a trust which never fails, a faith which is never disappointed or stopped short by any limit: those who once begin to trust in God find every day more answer to their trust, new depths of wonder for its exercise, and a new wealth of love for its encouragement.

What then is it to have faith in God? How would this faith affect our way of thinking and acting? By what change in our life can it lead us to the marvellous strength and fruitfulness which is promised in the text?

The whole answer to these questions lies far beyond our reach: but one part of it is simple enough, and is easily to be told.

God sets before us in the Bible a certain manner and temper of life. It is not that which we should have chosen for ourselves; it does not promise us much present enjoyment, nor yet does it seem likely to be very effective or strikingly successful: there is much about it and about the way it comes before us which we can-

not understand : it jars with our natural tastes and with our natural judgment, or common sense. In many points it is even the exact opposite of that which we should design for a vigorous and brilliant and promising character: we may sometimes have been inclined to think it might do well enough for a monk, or a bookworm, or a woman, but could have no chance in the rough and active competition of the busy world. Yet still God presses it upon us—He tells us it is our true calling, the right employment of all the faculties which He has given us : and He asks us to take it upon faith. He sets it before us plainly in express and declared contrast with the natural means of success, the attractive qualities which make us augur well of men and of their undertakings—“ Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts ” :—“ God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are ” :—and “ the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” The poor in spirit, the sorrowful, the meek, the patient : those who resist not evil, who judge not, strive not, seek not their own :—these are the heroes, the effective and eminent actors in the life of faith : even as their King and Captain was meek and lowly of

heart, despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Certainly at first it does not look a likely way to success and fruitfulness : it is not easy to understand how this can be the victory that overcometh the world. But it is the Divine way,—if we believe God it is the only right way : it is the way which we must take if we have the same faith in Him which great men have had in themselves and good men in their brethren. And it is a way, I think, in which, for all its unpromising look at first, encouragement soon meets us, and light soon breaks upon us : we are not left long without some earnest of the promise, some insight into the wisdom which has guided our feet into this way of peace. And if we would take one instance from all whereby the great cloud of witnesses, even all Saints, are ready to assure our hope, we might find it very clearly in the work of those to whom the words of the text were spoken.—They trusted Him Who so spoke to them : they cherished the little germ of faith, they chose the life which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had set before them as the only good and perfect way : they were meek and pure and truthful and patient : they told their message, bore their witness, were despised and hated for it, and so laid down their lives :—and what is the result ? What have the few outcast Galileans done ? What is the issue of their faith ?

We answer, the Universal Church of God: His Church striving, broken, and troubled now on earth, but yearly drawing nearer to its perfect triumph; His Church, gathering out of every nation in the world unnumbered souls of men and women, purifying, blessing, ennobling, sanctifying them: filling them with all the fulness of their Saviour's peace through the means of grace: and guiding them through the valley of the shadow of death by the revelation of the hope of glory.

VIII.

DISCORD AND HARMONY.

“ Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king.”

1 SAMUEL XV. 23.

AMONG the moral difficulties of the Old Testament is one which would, I think, trouble us less if we looked at it, not merely as a matter of external history, but rather by the light of our own conscience and experience. I mean the apparent disproportion between particular acts of sin and the temporal punishment with which God visited them. Even when we have considered the points on which Dr. Mozley insists in his masterly, and, I think, unanswerable Lectures upon *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages*: when we have recognized how God accommodated, as it were, His bidding to the possible or current conceptions of men's minds, that out of each stage in the education of our race He might elicit the very best character that it could produce: even when we have made allowance for the need

of teaching rough people by rough means, and of driving plain truths into the heart of a rude and obdurate age by strong and sudden judgments:—still it may be strange to us that the most awful weapons in all the armoury of wrath should be sometimes brought out against offences which at first seem little more than faults of taste or policy or a passing temper: faults such as even good men might commit in a moment of carelessness or irritation, or on what we should call their unlucky days. Miriam speaks against Moses because of a marriage which seemed open to criticism: and she is smitten with a hideous leprosy: Moses and his brother say a few arrogant words at Meribah: and they are shut out from the great hope of their life, the land which God swore unto their fathers: Uzzah puts forth his hand to the Ark of God as the oxen stumble and shake it: and there he dies by the Ark of God: Michal despises her husband as he dances in the sacred procession:—therefore Michal has no child unto the day of her death: Saul spares Agag and lets the people put by the best of the spoil of the Amalekites: and the Lord rejects him from being king over Israel, and Samuel comes to see him no more, and the Spirit of the Lord departs from him; and through misery and madness he goes down to a dishonoured death. The very roughness of the times in which such faults were

selected for punishments so dreadful tends to increase in one way the strangeness of the disproportion : for reserve and thoughtfulness and steady self-restraint are among the latest virtues of a long civilized society : and there might almost seem to be something like anachronism as well as extreme severity in demanding them on penalty of disease or death or childlessness from those whose moral code was still held down by polygamy and slavery and the indiscriminate bloodshed of exterminating wars. How could it be equitable in a life thus rude and wild, a life where only the broadest distinctions were as yet apparent, and where the subtler lines of moral definition had not yet been traced, to doom with so terrible a sentence the hasty word of an angry woman or of a soldier flushed with peril and victory ?

Surely a part of the answer to such questions is found when we reflect how infinitely different may be in different lives the moral significance of the very same act. It is not only that the real quality of every action depends upon its motive : there is often a further and a deeper meaning to be read in the inner history of that character out of which, perhaps, the motive itself has come. That which on the surface seems too trivial to be heeded, may be the only outward evidence of a change which has been going on in us for years ;

there perhaps alone may be revealed the drift and volume of the stream which from some far-off spring has been flowing for many a mile beneath the ground: and the silent, secret course of half a lifetime may be betrayed beyond recall in that one glimpse. The disuse of some old phrase or name of intimate affection may tell the death of a love, long waning it may be, but once linked with the best hope and purpose of our life: the tone or emphasis of a single word may show that we have finally renounced the allegiance or submission which some slow change in faith or judgment may long since have been tending to enfeeble: one glance, one half-instinctive movement, one thought even of assent may terrify us by its revelation of a sin that has grown into the very fibre of our character and crept on towards the intimacy of a natural impulse. There are trivial acts which may disclose the bygone stages of our moral history, just as some trick of gesture or pronounciation lets out the secret of a man's parentage or nationality, or as some faint and useless trait connects a species with the ancestry of its evolution. We may feel at the moment, as it passes over from our will to our memory, that the quick deed, the light word, is laden with a significance, a record, which years of moral effort may not cancel or deny: it has shown to ourselves, it may be, as well as to Almighty

God, the whole life and growth of a besetting sin : from that one act, it seems, the light is flashing back through years of selfishness or jealousy or cowardice or coarseness or neglect of prayer : back through the long vista of unnumbered sins, through the silent corridors of the forgotten past ; back it may be to the faint picture of some almost boyish choice, yet unrepented of and unrecalled, which took our love from God and gave it to the things He hates.—Yes, surely it is only for the clumsy needs of practical convenience that we call deeds great and small according to their range of visible effect : there is often very little for any one to see and nothing for any one to notice in the act or word which nevertheless arraigns a man with all the evidence of his past life before the judgment throne of his own conscience and of God Who made him.

Some such critical significance in Saul's neglect of the Divine command seems to be suggested in the strange comparison by which Samuel illustrates it : "Rebellion," he says, "is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." The likeness is not, on the surface, clear : there seems no near or necessary connection between disobedience and superstition : but perhaps their link of kindred may appear if we look more closely into the meaning and

history of the act which had provoked the sentence. We shall I think find it to have been the outcome and revelation of a deep disorder such as always tends to bewilder or distort the religious impulses of the soul.

Before Samuel speaks the message of God's judgment he carries the king's thoughts back to the most memorable day in all his life. "When thou wast little," he says, "in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee King over Israel?" By reference to all that happened on that day and to the part which then was given to him in the history and education of God's people, the real significance of his sin is to be read. On that day, whose every detail is written in the Bible with a minute and vivid accuracy such as may usually belong only to a man's memory of the most critical moments in his own experience, Saul had gone out, a simple unambitious youth, to seek his father's asses: and he had found a kingdom. But even the mysterious and undreamt of change which brought him thus from mere obscurity to the very front of the world's life, was really less in the sight of God than that spiritual revolution of his whole nature by which he was made able to understand and use his own unique vocation. For it was so that when he had turned his back "to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart." "And when

they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him : and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them." In the very truest and fullest sense of the word—a sense which now perhaps can only imperfectly be regained for it after much misuse—he was on that day converted. He looked out upon the same material and social circumstances : but he saw in them what he had never seen before. There was a new light, a new aspect, a new meaning in the earth and in the sky, in his own life and power, in his home and in his tribe, in the past and future of his people : he was taken, as it were, into the secret of God's purpose ; he was shown a volume of the world's history yet unenacted : and he knew that an eternal Will was bringing all its tumult into order, and that he himself was called to conscious fellowship with that steadfast and all-reaching providence of the Most High. For Saul also was indeed among the prophets : and, as Mr. Maurice has well said,—“ this was the faith of the prophets, this was the design of their appointment, to be witnesses by what they said and what they did and what they were, that men, whether they be kings or subjects, are not to be the sport of outward accidents and chance impulses, but to act habitually as the servants and scholars of a Divine Master ; Who can show them the path in which they

are to go, can give them continual inward illumination, can raise them to a point from which they may overlook the world around, and interpret the course of it.”¹ The spirit then which came to Saul on that great day of his anointing was the prophetic spirit of insight into the true drift and order of the world: he was admitted to the counsels of the Almighty, and recognised the Divinity that shapes our ends: he saw the sure purpose moving through the unconscious ages, and knew that the very Voice of God had called him, Saul, alone out of all the nations of the earth to watch and work in conscious harmony with His omnipotence and mercy. From that silent unsuspected height he saw the life of Israel not as a wild and boisterous struggle after conquest and plunder, but as a Divinely-ordered course of discipline and training for a world-wide trust: he saw his own great place in it not as a mere warrior, taller and stronger than his fellows, but as the servant and interpreter of God: he saw the mysterious energy of faith no longer as a vague tumultuous impulse breaking out into strange and impure forms of witchcraft and idolatry, but as the steadfast hope of all pure hearts passed down from age to age and answering

¹ Cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*, pp. 25, 26. The whole sermon on “The Life of Saul” is full of suggestive interest.

with a flush of ever-growing glory to the growing clearness of God's Self-revealing. Thus was he prepared to reign: thus did he see the truth of history in all its lines stretched out and ordered in the sight of God: thus did he learn the law whose conscious service was to be his sovereignty.

What might not Saul have been, where might he not have placed his name among the beloved and blessed of God and men, if only he had enthroned the revelation of that day for undivided empire in his heart: if only, like another Saul, he could have looked back to the day of his conversion and declared that he had not been disobedient unto the heavenly vision: if only like him he had thenceforward striven "to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"? For is not this the secret of all his failure and misery, his madness and his superstition, is not this the deep significance of his sin,—that while he saw the Light he would not live by it? he knew the Law and would not work by it: he heard the Counsel of God and held his will apart from it. "He was," says Dean Stanley, "half-converted, half-aroused: his mind moved unequally and disproportionately in its new sphere": until "the zeal of a partial conversion degenerated into a fanciful and gloomy superstition."¹ All through his

¹ Cf. A. P. Stanley, *The Jewish Church*, vol. ii. pp. 16-20.

life there went the maddening elements of discord: day after day the higher and the lower fought within him for the throne of his irresolute, distracted heart: day after day he woke to hear two voices clashing and disputing for his guidance: and now he followed one and now the other: yet when he chose the better he still looked wistfully at the lower life, and when he chose the worse he trembled at the thought of God. He could neither say, with the frank self-degradation of the heathen satirist, "I see the better and approve it: I pursue the worse": nor yet with the man after God's own heart, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in Thy truth: O knit my heart unto Thee, that I may fear Thy Name." And so he lived in discord, and he reigned by anarchy: restless and aimless, suspicious and dissatisfied, halting between light and darkness, and beset in that twilight by weird unhealthy thoughts like the evil dreams that make it bliss to wake, ever falling away from that which he saw and owned as God-like:—and when at last as he beat down Amalek from Havilah to Shur he feared his own soldiers and obeyed their voice, when he ignored his solemn mission as God's warrior, and profaned the judicial majesty of war, and let his people rush upon the prey:—then no poor excuse of generosity or sacrifice—no thin pretext of a popular concession could veil the true and deep signifi-

cance of the rebellion : and the long-stayed word of the strong and patient Judge went forth to Samuel—"It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king"—and Samuel said unto Saul—"Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee."

Let us pass to our own lesson in his misery through the recollection of a scene which may be dear and eloquent to many of us.

There is surely a deep meaning in the submission with which such a life as his welcomes the influence of music. The moral discord, the distraction and disorder of his will spread at times over all the powers of the mind : and the strain and irritation of that restless conflict broke out in gusts of terror and frenzy. "And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold, now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp : and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well."—"And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul that David took an harp, and played with his hand : so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." Even through his misery there came the great and constant prophecy of music : above the dis-

cord of his soul he heard those merciful echoes of a higher harmony:¹ he knew that somewhere outside all the chaos of his broken life, there were steadfast principles of melody, and calm and measured ways, and the eternal rhythm of an undisturbed song: he felt once more that the Most High is He Who sweetly and mightily ordereth all things, and that there is peace for those who love His law: and as the harmonies of earth bore into his troubled soul their witness to the God of peace, they drove back the encroaching violence of his despair, and lifted up once more the veil which hung before the entrance through obedience into rest.

For "there is a rest which remaineth for the people of God." That great prophecy of music is among us still: still "the true harmony of tuneful sounds" helps men to be patient through distress and conflict, and to hope that their steps may yet be led into the sure ways of peace. But now that prophecy is read in the light of its fulfilment:² since the perfect and harmonious life, which music only hints at, has been lived on earth: and we are called to take it for our own. In the recess of a wall in the Catacomb of St. Calixtus there is a painting of Orpheus: in his left hand he holds a lyre: the right

¹ Cf. F. D. Maurice, *The Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*, p. 29.

² Cf. Archbishop Trench, *Hulsean Lectures for 1846*, pp. 256-258.

is raised as though to mark the rhythm of his song : and round him are the wild beasts, tamed and hushed to listen while he plays. There is no doubt that the picture represents our Blessed Lord. Though the artist as he painted it was surrounded by the bodies of those who for Jesus' sake had borne the cruelty of persecution even unto death : though he himself, it may be, had left all to follow Christ and to be a partaker of His sufferings : still he knew Him as the Master of all Harmony, the Prince of Peace : still he felt that only since he took the Crucified to be his Lord had all the wild discord and conflict of his soul passed into mysterious and most blessed confidence of union with an eternal law of melody.¹ And we, brethren, if out of the confusion and bewilderment of our days, from the weakness and hesitation of our faith, we look back with a bitter sense of severance and strangeness to the simple and unhindered self-surrender of those Saints of old : if sometimes we seem forced to say that the complexity of our life, and the irresolute discord of our hearts, and the besetting, ever-surging strife of tongues about us, will not quickly or as yet completely pass into the exceeding peace which God vouchsafed to them : still let us hold fast by this,—which is indeed a

¹ Cf. on this general characteristic of the paintings in the Catacombs, Bp. Milman, *The Love of the Atonement*, p. 177, and Dr. Westcott on the Epistles of St. John, p. 347.

truth that all may test and prove:—that in proportion as the perfect obedience of the life of Christ comes through humility and prayer and thought to be the constant aim of all our efforts: in proportion as we try, God helping us, to think and speak and act as He did, and through all the means of grace to sanctify Him in our hearts: we shall with growing hope and with a wonder that is ever lost in gratitude know that even our lives are not without the earnest of their rest in an eternal harmony: that through them there is sounding more and more the echo of a faultless music: and that He Who loves that concord, He Who alone can ever make us what He bids us be, will silence in us every harsh and jarring note: that our service too may blend with the consenting praise of all His Saints and Angels.

IX.

THE INNER LIFE.

“The Life was manifested.”—1 ST. JOHN I. 2.

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”—1 ST. JOHN III. 14.

THERE is a strange, controlling power of beauty and of solemn strength in such words as these of the opening verses of the First Epistle of St. John. They arrest our thoughts: they come to us with a chastening yet most gentle force, which makes us serious, even in spite of ourselves, as children are sometimes hushed by the splendour of a great sight. We feel that he who wrote these words knew what he meant: and that he meant something very high and pure and Divine:—and we may think that it would have been a wonderful thing to see him, and to talk with him, and to hear him tell of our Blessed Lord.

And there are, I think, two reasons easily to be seen for this peculiar power of St. John's words. It has been said that the more a word is like a thought: the more a thought is like a soul: the more a soul is like to God:—the more beauty do we find.¹ And St. John's words are

¹ “Plus une parole ressemble à une pensée, une pensée à une âme, une âme à Dieu, plus tout cela est beau.”—Joubert, quoted by Graty, *Les Sources*, p. 17.

just simply his thoughts coming out in sound : and his thoughts are simply the utterance of his soul's continual life : and his soul is very, very near to God. And so, as we read, there is, it may be, only a very thin veil between us and the very Light of God : the words find us out and touch us because they come so straight, so quick from Him Who made us, Him Who perfectly knows, yet still most wondrously loves us. And so, perhaps, we may feel sometimes almost as if St. John must have known us, and the troubles and hopes and trials and joys of our life :—as if he had written to us.

And then secondly—there is in his words that quiet, sure, and gentle authority which belongs to an old man looking calmly back over very many years of steadfast life. He has tried that of which he tells : it is no new conviction that makes him speak, and prompts his words : but the steady, sure, mature experience of at least half a century. He has known and believed :—he has seen all sorts of changes ; terrors and violence and alarms of every kind have swept over him : but the truth has held firm and come out clear after all : the faith of which he writes has worn well, and stood him in good stead for some sixty years. One after another his brothers in the Apostolate have passed away : the old generation is gone, and new faces gather round

nim, and there are new fancies and new fashions and new dangers to the Faith:—but, still he abides; and as the Church of Christ spreads far and wide, and town after town wakes at the preaching of His Name, still the old man tells again and again his unchanging message:—the message of that Life which he learnt to know and love and worship in the days that seem so long gone by:—those wonderful days that were spent by Gennesaret, or in the long journeyings, or in the streets of Jerusalem, with Jesus of Nazareth, his Lord and Master:—still to one after another he simply teaches what has been the strength of all his patient, holy life for all those many years:—“that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life”:—“that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us”:—and “we know that we have passed from death unto life.” So St. John looks back, and simply writes what every year has made more plain and sure to him: what every year has put further out of the reach of change or uncertainty. He receives the reward of constancy in the peace of a calm old age;—it is simply inconceivable to him now that anything should alter the truth by which he has lived, or weaken its hold upon his heart.

For he has known and believed the love that God hath to us:—and that knowledge and belief have become like a true part of himself.—But also, he has been learning ever more and more what is the innermost meaning, what is the very truth and substance of the Christian Life:—what it really is to be a Christian. He has watched the change in his own life: he has seen it pass again and again over the lives of others: he has seen the little bands of people coming together, many of them, it may be, poor and despised among men: and he has felt that there was a new force, a new temper among them as they met; that, as they prayed or gave thanks or gathered round him for the Holy Eucharist, there was something which made them quite unlike all other groups and companies of men. And still as the Church has grown, as more and more have owned the Crucified to be their Lord and Saviour, still he has seen this temper, this transforming power widening out and filling their hearts, and making all things new to them. What is it, this hidden yet un-failing power that thus changes men, and gives them this new character which the world can never give nor take away?—It is the Grace, the Gift of God, undoing all that sin has wrought in them, taking away the selfishness which makes men hard, and the impurity which makes them cruel, and the distrust which

makes them cold and stiff, and teaching them truly and heartily to love one another. Yes, this is what makes that wonderful difference in the little company of the faithful as they gather, perhaps, in some secret room, for fear of those who hate and persecute them. Outside, in the great city, men are quarrelling, or vying one with another : class is set against class, party against party, man against man : but here, all is like a perfect, faultless home : the one grace of Love is stirring in the souls of all : each is only longing for the happiness, the welfare of others : the joy of one brightens the looks of all : for all the multitude of them that believe are of one heart and of one soul. The world has never seen such brotherhood as this :—no, the world puts barriers between man and man, and here all barriers are broken down :—this wondrous trust and love, this frank and glad communion of heart with heart, can be nothing else save the Almighty Work of God, touching and filling with His Love the souls of men : it is the very evidence and token of His Redeeming Hand : for hereby “ we know that we have passed from death unto Life, because we love the brethren.”

Yes, it is like passing from death unto life, to escape from selfishness, and to learn truly and wholly to love one’s fellow-men, and to find the love that God has put into their hearts. While a man is seeking his own

advantage, eager for his own pleasure, indulging his own temper, he is not really living: he is like one walking in his sleep, busy with the phantoms of his dreams, and seeing nothing of the real life that is going on round about him. But then, suddenly or gradually, it may be, God's grace awakes him and opens his eyes to the real truth of life. It may be that something dashes a cherished pleasure from his grasp: or sickness or bereavement cripples for ever his power of enjoyment: or else, perhaps, God, in His gentleness of compassion, deals with him otherwise, and teaches him simply by lessons of happiness and thrills of blessing:—but somehow he sees the blunder, the stupidity of selfishness:—he finds out the happiness of loving, and the undreamt-of grace of love that is ready to greet him all around:¹ he begins to watch and work for others; and again and again God cheers him with some glimpse of answering gentleness, some token of the grace that is astir about him:—and so he comes to know that he has passed from death unto life because he loves the brethren.

There is no true learning, no true getting on in life, apart from that. Love is life, and lovelessness is death:—the one is as the brightness of a summer noonday, the other as the blackest depth of midnight: and it is God alone, Who of His great mercy turneth that shadow of

¹ Cf. R. Browning, "A Death in the Desert," *Poetical Works*, vol. vi. p. 119.

death into the morning. A great artist and critic of our own day has said, "He only is advancing in life, whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into Living peace."¹ A man may heap up money, or add honour to honour, or make for himself a great and splendid position in the world:—but it is all as nothing, all a mere mistake and blindness, if he is not learning, finding love; if his heart is hard and cold, if he is not growing both gentler and dearer to his fellow-men. Historians tell of a weird custom amongst a savage nation in times long gone by:—that when a chief died they would dress his dead body in all his finest clothes, and set it in his chariot of state, and carry it round, with soldiers and heralds about it, to all his friends: and at every house the dead body in its splendid robes was placed at the head of the table, and all the guests feasted in its honour.² It was a ghastly, barbarous custom: but surely there is something like it when a man is decked with all that the world can give him, when he is surrounded with luxuries and pleasures, and every one is shewing him respect: and all the while his heart is dead and cold: and there is no true life flowing in his veins, and the night, the everlasting night, is closing in upon

¹ John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, p. 63.

² Cited by Mr Ruskin in the passage just referred to. Cf. *Herodotus*, Bk. iv. ch. 73.

him : because he loves no one half so well as he loves himself. Ay, it is better, a thousand times better, to have the hardest, dreariest lot a man can bear : better to slave on day after day, and hardly to keep soul and body hanging together : better to carry a weary load of sadness or temptation ever dragging at one's heart : better to be alone, misunderstood, despised, and slandered : better all this with just the knowledge, just the quivering flame of love within one, than to have all that this proud world can give one, and to have no love. For "he that loveth not, abideth in death."

Love, then, true, pure love towards God and man, is the very essence and meaning of the Christian life. As the grace of God changes a man's heart and cleanses and sanctifies him, this is the great evidence of the change, this is the great difference which it makes : that he begins to grow in love, to lay aside self-seeking, and to live for others :—and so he may know that he has passed from death unto life. He may know it even here and now :—yes, that great discovery of love, that learning to live for others and finding the grace and gentleness that God is keeping up all over the world,—even now it is the way from death to life. Even now it changes homes, it lightens every burden, it brings peace and gladness into the hardest days : it alters even the tone of a man's voice and the very look of his face.

But all this, blessed and surpassing as it is, far above all else in this world, still is but the beginning. For that life into which we pass, as God's dear grace of love comes in us and about us, is the very life of Heaven. Yes, we are never so near to Heaven, we can never get so true a thought of what it is, as when some great glow of love is filling our hearts. St. John tells us so : " Beloved," he says, " it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him " :—and He is Love. On our way to Paradise and Heaven all else must drop away from us, all else must be unlearnt, save only the love which we have felt or found :—that silent, hidden grace is the only thing in all the world of which we are quite sure that we can take it with us. Think how strange it may be at the last day—to see all who have been great or rich or brilliant or clever or popular in this world, utterly stripped of all that they were proud of, all that they were praised for : with no advantage, nothing to show for all that once was so admired and so envied :—while many who were never noticed, poor backward, timid souls, who were thrust out of sight in the busy world, shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, rich and glorious there with the love they gathered in their quiet and gentle life on earth.

Yes—here is the lesson that St. John the Divine,

the disciple whom Jesus loved, would bear into our hearts. This is the great business and meaning of our life on earth: that we should more and more yield up our hearts to God's great grace of love: that we should let it enter ever more fully and more freely into us, so that it may even fill our whole heart and life. We must day after day be driving back, in His strength, the sin that doth so easily beset us, and the selfishness that sin has fastened in our hearts:—we must quite clearly, without any excuses or any exceptions, get rid of all dislikes, of all jealousies, of all unkindness and of all scorn:—and then His love will day by day increase in us. Prayer will win and keep it: work will strengthen and exercise it: the Bible will teach us how to know and prize it, how to praise God for it:—the Holy Eucharist will ever renew and quicken its power in our hearts. And so (blessed be God!) love and joy and peace will grow in us, beyond all that we can ask or think: and He will forgive us, for Love's sake, all the failures, all the faults in whatever work He has given us to do: and will bring us at last into the fulness of that life which even here He has suffered us to know: into that one Eternal Home, where Love is perfect, and unwearied, and unending: and where nothing ever can part us from one another or from Him.

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